

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA  
STUDIES IN  
SOVIET UNION**

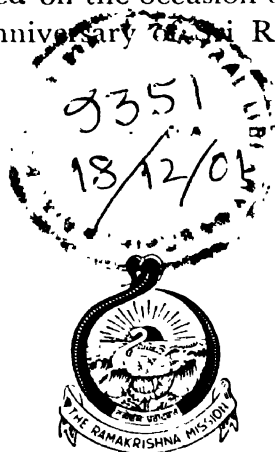




# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA STUDIES IN SOVIET UNION

*Translated from the Russian by  
Harish C. Gupta*

Published on the occasion of the 150th  
birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna



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## FOREWORD

An idea is more powerful than even an atom bomb. It may work slowly but it nevertheless has a devastating power in the psychological make-up of man which also creates all the machineries of construction and destruction. An idea can be suppressed for some time but human mind which produces ideas is irrespressible and goes on weaving webs of thread from which can be made the cord of bondage as well as the embroidery for decorating human life for happiness and peace. Communism is such an idea. Plato's Communism, Owenism, Marxism, Saint-Simonism, Syndicalism, Guild Socialism and many other variants of it are all trying to evolve an idea and give shape to it so that human life can become happier and richer. But most of these ideas prescribe a revolutionary method which will cause war and bloodshed and which depend only on a materialistic philosophy. Religion is termed an opium for the people and should therefore be crushed out; and really, religion has always been a machinery of tyranny which joins hands with the political forces to bring about the suppression and repression of the lower strata of society which constitute the majority of the populace in a country. In India religion, which in Indian language is called 'Dharma', differs from the word 'Religion' in this that it means that which upholds the whole existence of a being. In short, it brings in the idea of spirituality, as opposed to religion which is based on doctrines, dogmas and rituals which constitute the fundamentals of religion in other places of the world. In India doctrines, dogmas, and rituals also are accepted but for gradually leading a man towards the highest aim of life which is the attainment of spiritual Reality. But even in India there has been a philosophy like the Charvaka philosophy in which it has been said that there is no other existence except the mundane one. Hence, the earthly monarch, who can give you life and death, is the only Supreme Being. Enjoyment of sense pleasure is the only goal of life. Once the body is consumed by fire, there cannot

be any rebirth. But in India many systems of philosophy evolved which pointed out that the transcendence of the mundane existence is the only goal of life. In India the word 'philosophy' is not merely logical and rational exposition of certain ideas. Since the age of the Vedas it has been said that if any theory cannot be proved, verified, and envisaged, it has no utility in human life. So, the word 'Darshan' or 'Realization' is used in Indian language for 'philosophy'.

With these ideas keeping before us we should approach the Russian revolution and the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism want to bring about a revolution on the basis of a thought-structure and only a little more than sixty years has passed since this idea was introduced into Russia. And making this idea grow properly, Russia is said to have put up an iron curtain around it. So it was not possible for the rest of the world to see the process of actualization of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. But as Sri Ramakrishna says, after planting a sapling a hedge is to be put around it so that it cannot be eaten up by goats etc. But when the sapling has grown into a strong tree there is no more necessity for the hedge. So we find that the iron-curtain is being slowly drawn up and we are able to peep into a country which had been trying to develop its own ideas in its own way. It always has been said that Russia committed many acts of atrocities and also barred out other ideals to enter into her territory. But which country has not committed atrocities beginning from the ancient time to the modern period ? Yes, atrocity and suppression of free access of ideas are bad but every country of the world can be accused of the same crime. I am not in any way defending Russia. I do not like atrocities, I do not like disapproval of free flow of different ideas. But what I want to convey is that this is the state of the world today. Who will be the first man who will throw the first stone at 'the woman taken in adultery ?' So new ideas should be made accessible to everybody and more freedom should be given to people in general. Swami Vivekananda, the founder

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of our Organisation, has said, 'Liberty is the first condition of growth.' I believe in this.

A few months ago some Russian dignitaries visited the Belur Math. I had to carry on conversation with the group through an interpreter. Yet, I found them quite frank, liberal, not impervious to the ideas of others, though they might not have accepted them. But this is the first glimpse of Russia I could have and it pleased me a great deal. In that group there was an eminent poet of Russia. He has written a poem on Swami Vivekananda. I got the English translation of that poem and I got that printed in one of our journals. This Russian interpretation of Swamiji's life and teaching may not be agreeable in toto to all of us; but the vigour, the conviction of statements, pleased me. In it there are the following sentences:

'Two worlds. Two poles. Two outlooks.  
But the division lines between them—  
As all things that divide—are an illusion.  
The time is ripe for somebody to come  
And to collect the scattered grains of truth.

'So who will undertake this necessary work ?  
I'll speak out loud of what is in my heart  
I'll speak without doubt- it is Russia!'

This reminded me that Swami Vivekananda entertained great hopes about Russia. In an unpublished letter written on 16th July 1896, from London by a young disciple John P. Fox, one reads, ('Swamiji) talked much about (Russia) which he said the other evening he expects to lead the world.'

This was an unusual statement in 1896 when Russia with her teeming millions was in the thralldom of tyrant Czars and more tyrant priests. But even after the revolution, Russia was impervious to any new thought. Then how could Russia lead the world ? But in Russia now the iron curtain is gradually rising and Russia is opening up for other thoughts, specially Swami Vivekananda's thoughts which, according to us, can be

the philosophical motivating power with his practical Advaita instilled into him by his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna, who had asked people to serve an individual looking upon him/her as divinity itself. If this idea which Swami Vivekananda interpreted as doing away with all privileges whether physical, intellectual, economic, or spiritual is accepted by Russia, then we hope surely that great and powerful country will lay down a new path for the emergence of a new society and a new humanity. The underlying idea of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings and also those of Swami Vivekananda is not however, matter but spirit. Man after all, in the words of Shakespeare, is 'a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more: It is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' So it is spirit and not matter that has been preached in India from time immemorial and which has been revived, reinterpreted and given a practical shape to by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda which alone, if accepted by Russia along with her ideas of equitable distribution of wealth can save humanity.

Sister Nivedita, one of the greatest interpreters of Swami Vivekananda's life, says in one place, 'If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realisation. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid.

'This is the realisation which makes Vivekananda the great preacher of Karma, not as divorced from, but as expressing Jnana and Bhakti. To him, the workshop, the study, the farmyard, and the field are as true and fit scenes for the meeting of God with man as the cell of the monk or the door of the temple. To him, there is no difference between service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality.'



## FOREWORD

Swami Vivekananda, as recorded by Sister Christine, made a remark on one day startling the group of his followers, all Americans, by saying, 'The next great upheaval which is to bring about a new epoch will come from Russia or China. I can't quite see which, but it will be either Russia or China.' So, Swami Vivekananda had great faith in Russia and it gladdens our hearts when I find that Russian people are finding interest in the ideas of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. So I was extremely glad when I was requested by Swami Lokeswarananda to write a foreword to a book which he is going to publish in English from some of the material on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and Vedanta published in U.S.S.R. I have only glanced through two articles, one of which was published as a booklet and another was published in Swami Vivekananda's Centenary Volume, 1963. I may not agree with all the views expressed by the two Russian Scholars but their study reveals open minds and objective approach. I hope the other articles will also be incisive, objective, and free from any predilection. The study of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda is opening up a new relationship between India and Russia on the spiritual level. Russia is a friend of India in the material level also. But spirit is more potent than matter and I hope this study of the greatest spiritual men of modern India, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, will bring Russia closer to our country and we shall be able to fashion out a higher and more productive path for the whole of humanity.

SWAMI HIRANMAYANANDA



## PREFACE

**A**S Preface to our collective work on Swami Vivekananda, I have decided to take my article\* 'Swami Vivekananda: The Indian Humanist, Democrat and Patriot' published almost a quarter of a century back in *Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume* brought out by Swami Vivekananda Centenary Committee from Calcutta in 1963. I have deliberately not changed anything in this article for two reasons. First, for showing that our main assessments of Swami Vivekananda, our opinions on his views and his work have since remained the same, and have only been deepened, expanded, and, of course, defined more precisely and accurately. And second, because the publication of this article in an authoritative Indian work, as also Swami Vivekananda birth centenary celebrations in USSR, gave an impetus to further work in our country on the study of his heritage along with a study of the views of Ramakrishna. In their studies of the problem, the Soviet scholars take their cue from the great Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy, who was the first to take note of these two eminent leaders of Indian spiritual culture and to strive to popularize their humanist views in Russia before the Revolution.

A few words here as to how this collective work emerged. In December 1983 I had the privilege of being in Calcutta and staying at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, where, of course, I had stayed years back when the Chief of the Institute was Swami Ranganathananda. I was received with all kindness by the present Head of this organization, Swami Lokeshwarananda, who familiarized me with the latest publications of the Institute of Culture and invited me to speak in the Institute on the study of the heritage of Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna in Soviet Union. My lecture was attended by many distinguished leaders of Indian culture of Calcutta. The local press covered the event widely, paying particular attention to the idea in my lecture that Swami Vivekananda's call for

\*See pages 205-220

peace and friendship amongst peoples was extremely important and relevant today in the interests of the struggle for diffusing international tension and of the fight against the threat of thermo-nuclear war, for the sake of survival of life on this earth, and that his ideas and calls for a struggle for spiritual decolonization of India played in the past and play today a great role.

The Indian colleagues showed great interest in the works of Soviet scholars engaged in the study of the questions of Indian spiritual culture, particularly in our studies of the heritage of Swami Vivekananda, and suggested that a collection of our writings on the theme be made ready for publication by the Institute. This offer was greatly welcomed by our specialists on problems of Indian culture and we started working on the preparation of a collective work. Naturally, first and foremost, we were interested in the latest studies in this field by scholars of India and of other countries. We got the opportunity to acquaint ourselves with these studies and took them into account in our work.

For us, the scholars engaged in the study of Indian culture, Swami Lokeshwarananda's visit to Moscow in October 1984 was extremely useful. We heard his lectures with great interest, made use of his suggestions, arranged with him meetings of the authors contributing to this collective work then under preparation.

And the book is ready now. It contains the works of eight Soviet authors, those specialists of ours who have been specially studying creatively this problem. I mention their names here: these are (i) V. S. Kostyuchenko, Reader (*docent*) of the Philosophy Faculty; (ii) A. D. Litman, D.Sc. (Philosophy), senior research associate of the Institute of Oriental Studies of USSR Academy of Sciences; (iii) E. N. Komarov, Ph.D. (History), a Sector Head of the Institute of Oriental Studies of USSR Academy of Sciences; (iv) R. B. Rybakov, Ph.D. (History), senior research associate of the Institute of Oriental Studies of USSR Academy of Sciences; (v) O. V. Mezentsева, Ph.D. (Philosophy), research associate of the Institute of Philosophy

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of USSR Academy of Sciences; (vi) E. P. Ghelishev, Ph.D. (Philosophy), research associate of the Institute of Oriental Studies of USSR Academy of Sciences; (vii) A. P. Gnatyuk Danil'chuk, Reader, Institute of International Relations of USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and (viii) A. A. Tkacheva.

The Indian readers already had the opportunity of knowing in their time the works of the aforementioned Soviet specialists whose contributions are presented in this book. Some works of theirs are published from India too. I shall refer here in this context to my books on Suryakanta Tripathi Nirala (published in Hindi in 1980 from Rajpal and Sons, Delhi) and Sumitranandan Pant (also published in Hindi, in 1970, by Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi), in which I endeavoured to show what a great influence Swami Vivekananda's ideas had on these well-known Hindi poets as well as on the entire Indian literature.

The works of all our authors devoted to various aspects of Vivekananda's world outlook and activity, surveying it in the overall context of spiritual, cultural and social-political life of India of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, permeated by a unified conception and research methodology, can, I feel, be regarded as a definite achievement of Soviet Indology in the study of the heritage of this humanist, democrat, patriot, and distinguished leader of the spiritual culture of India.

The authors of the book hope that this book will be of interest and use to Indian readers, to all who are interested in the personality of Swami Vivekananda, in his humanist ideas and views, his contribution to the struggle of Indian people for spiritual decolonization, for peace, democracy, and progress.

In conclusion, it remains for me to thank Swami Lokeswarananda and all his assistants and colleagues for friendly assistance and for kindly offering to bring out our collective work as a publication of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.

E. P. CHELISHEV



# HISTORY OF STUDY IN RUSSIA OF RELIGIOUS-PHILOSOPHICAL HERITAGE OF RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

O. V. MEZENTSEVA

RUSSIA has had a sincere, vital interest in the spiritual and creative works of the people of India since the olden times. The book on Indian philosophy first to be translated into Russian was the *Bhagavadgītā*. It was published in USSR in 1788, that is, three years after this famous masterpiece of religious-philosophical thought of India had come to be known to the European intellectuals. True, the translation had been made from English and not from original Sanskrit, and was thus a translation from a translation. But gradually Russia formed her own Indological school, widening the circle of investigators. By the close of the last and with the advent of the present century the best works of Russian Indologists, I. P. Minaev, S. F. Ol'denburg, F. I. Shcherbatskoi [Stcherbatsky], won well-deserved recognition as Oriental studies in the world.

## ORIENTAL STUDIES IN RUSSIA

Like the Oriental studies all the world over, before the Russian Revolution, the native school of Indology developed on the plinth of historico-philological trend; and the focus of attention of the specialists was chiefly on the study of historico-textual heritage of the distant past and early medieval period. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Russia did not have intensive direct contact with India, and the number of Russian travellers to the remote country of India was very small. For a long time, right up to the last quarter of the past century, the religious life of India of that time remained beyond the reach of Russian authors, and Gerasim Lebedev's book<sup>1</sup> written on the basis of materials gathered by him at the time of his

12-year travel (1785-1797) in the country, remained the only one specially devoted to the description of beliefs of the inhabitants of India of the eighteenth century.

The Russian reader could have some idea of the characteristics of the religious life of India in the nineteenth century from the materials published on the pages of periodicals. More frequently, these were translations of the notes of European travellers, or observations of Russian journalists keeping a close watch on studies in Europe of the spiritual life of the people of the countries of the East. Apparently, the first information in Russia about the reformatory process in Hinduism beginning from the first quarter of the nineteenth century was available in the article *Dwarakanath Tagore and Present State of Indian Education* (1847).<sup>2</sup> Published in the "Library for Reading" series without indicating the name of the author, it contained sufficiently detailed information on Dwarakanath Tagore's views. The practical transformational work of Rammohun Roy was also mentioned in a few words. The principles of some most substantial ideas about Hinduism held by these very thinkers were set forth also in an article of the well-known historian and publicist of the time, a member of the staff of a number of progressive journals, S. S. Shashkov (1873),<sup>3</sup> devoted newly to a description of the ruinous policy of the British administration in India. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Russian journals published also other observations (true, too short) on the development of the religious process in India. Usually, these were just fairly cursory surveys of the writings of European authors on this problem.<sup>4</sup> The works of foreign scholars translated into Russian by the end of the last century included also those which, to some extent or the other, touched upon the work of religious-reformist societies.<sup>5</sup>

#### STUDY OF MODERN INDIA

The earliest among the Russian scholars to take up the study of various aspects of the life (including also religious life) of



*modern* India was undoubtedly I. P. Minaev (1840-1890). One of the distinguished Orientalists, a specialist with a wide academic interest, the founder of the Russian School of Indology, I. P. Minaev always stressed that the 'study of old India must not eclipse the scientific and practical importance of vital phenomena in modern India.'<sup>6</sup> He reflected most thoroughly and in great detail upon the contemporary position of Hinduism in the notes and essays prepared by him at the time of his travels in South-East Asia. The Russian scholar came to India thrice (in 1874-1875; 1880; and 1885-1886), and his notes (those of a person who had seen things for himself) recorded over twenty years were published in the journal of the capital, *Vestnik Evropy* [*Herald of Europe*]. I. P. Minaev made many wonderful observations on the characteristics of the Hindu faith, on cult practices of various sects of Hinduism, on the mutual relations of the followers of Hinduism and Islam etc. He threw great light on the practical reform work of the reformist society Brahmo Samaj, devoting much attention in his diaries to the exposition of the views of Rammohun, Dwarakanath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen and other well-known Brahmos of the first half of the last century.<sup>7</sup> Minaev's essays offered much valuable information on the development of the process of reform in India. Nevertheless, the religious quests of the Indian thinkers of the new times did not become the main domain of the academic work of the well-known Russian Indologist. The traveller's notes have remained the only reference known to us of Minaev to the spiritual and creative work of the religious leaders of nineteenth century India. We have not come across in them any mention of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the representatives of the next generation of reformists and contemporaries of Minaev. One cannot, however, rule out the possibility that a study of Minaev's works lying in the Archives may add to our present knowledge of his creative heritage. On the other hand, it is also possible that Minaev was just not interested in the views of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda; or, that the circle of those Indians whom

he met during his travels still did not distinctly realize the relationship and sequence of the views of Brahmos, the most educated people of his time, with the teachings of Ramakrishna, the uneducated priest of a small temple near Calcutta. Ramakrishna's great pupil, Vivekananda, however, came to be known to the whole world under this name much later, only after the death of I. P. Minaev.

#### THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS

Beginning with the fifties of the last century, right up to the Great October Socialist Revolution, the problems associated with Hinduism received extensive treatment in Russian theological writings. The overall surmise made by the authors of these writings was something like this: At one point of time India knew the true, that is, the Christian religion, but gradually the Indians lost the Christian faith and got engaged in 'petty cults and chaotic darkness of superstitions'. These writings also touched cursorily the religious quests of Rammohun Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore and other reformists of Hinduism. 'For the best of Hindus, however, the dim light of universally human religious postulates . . . filters through this chaos and this darkness,'<sup>8</sup>—wrote, for instance, the well-known professor and theologian A. Vvedensky. It is clear that the initial principles set down by these authors in the treatment of religious process in India also determined their interpretation of the essence of religious innovations: these were perceived as an outcome of the familiarity of more enlightened minds of India with Christianity, the religion of the 'civilized' minority, posing a contrast to the 'coarse', 'native' beliefs of the Indians. It is almost like this that the speech of the Brahmoist P. C. Majumdar at the World Congress of Religions at Chicago (September 1893) was commented upon by an observer of the department of 'Chronicle of Church and Social Life Abroad' of the 'Church Herald' published under the aegis of the St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy. He wrote: 'The adherents of this movement [reformist.—author] do not any more accept

the infallibility of sacred Hindu books. They recognize the superiority of the *Bible* though place it too in the same line as the *Koran* and the *Zend Avesta*.<sup>9</sup> We did not find any mention of the names of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the works of the leaders of the Protestant Russian Church of the 50's-90's of the last century. The reports of the observer of the work of the World Congress of Religions also make no mention of the stormy speech of Vivekananda, though it has been often repeated in these that the representatives of the Eastern faiths had a great success at the Congress to the great displeasure of the organizers. The name of Vivekananda in this context is mentioned, for the first time, in the 'Church Chronicle' for the next year, that is, for 1894, though the gist of the speeches of Japanese and Chinese Buddhists is found given in much greater detail. The author of the report gives no favourable review of Vivekananda's lectures in America, observing that he [Vivekananda] 'created no less confusion in America and joy in India and in any case caused no small damage to the task of Christian missions.'<sup>10</sup>

In America, as per contemporary account, Vivekananda met, and later became very friendly and kept up active correspondence for number of years, with Prince S. Volkonsky who was present at the Congress of Religions as an unofficial representative of the Russian Church.<sup>11</sup> A descendent of the famous Decembrist, a student of I. P. Minaev, and a man of wide education, invited several years later to America to deliver lectures in the universities there on the history of Russian culture, S. Volkonsky had an ardent interest in the spiritual life of the peoples of Oriental countries. Nonetheless, we have not been able to find in his published works any direct reference to his acquaintance with Vivekananda.

Summing up what has been said above, it can obviously be affirmed that up to the end of the last century Vivekananda's name is found mentioned only once, that too in the reports of the 'Church Chronicle.' There still was no work throwing light on the views of Vivekananda or on those of his teacher

Ramakrishna, though the work of their predecessors—the reformers of Hinduism, Rammohun Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Dwarakanath Tagore and others—had been touched upon in some measure or the other in Russian academic, publicist, and theological literature.

#### RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA

The earliest authentic information on religious activity of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, obviously, came to Russia from Western Europe. The first appearance of Ramakrishna's name in press is, as known, associated with the publication in the January 1896 issue of the journal *Imperial and Quarterly Review* of an article of the former professor of Sanskrit in Calcutta, S. Tawney, under the title 'A Modern Indian Saint.' Half year later, the distinguished Indologist of Europe, Max Müller published his article True Mahatma (August 1896), and still two years later his book *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*.<sup>12</sup>

The Russian Orientalists immediately reacted to Max Müller's book—essentially a valuable source for the study of the sayings and parables of Ramakrishna who did not leave behind any manuscript heritage. At a session of the Oriental department of the Russian Archaeological Society in December 1899, Academician S. F. Ol'denburg made a report on the publication of Max Müller's book and presented an exposition of its contents viz. of Ramakrishna's biography, and of his sayings recorded by his pupils, as appended to the book. A greater part of Academician S. F. Ol'denburg's time was taken up by the reading of translations into Russian of Ramakrishna's individual sayings. Academician Ol'denburg also made critical observations on the text of the biography which was based on posthumous notes: 'this is not quite a biography but partly life: the pupil, despite the obvious efforts put in by him could not discard many features of the life of his teacher whose existence he himself did not doubt but which we would, of course, assign to legend.'<sup>13</sup>

S. F. Ol'denburg did not return to Ramakrishna's work any

## RELIGIOUS-PHILOSOPHICAL HERITAGE

more. The translations of the sayings of the 'holy man from Dakshineswar' were published in Russian in the years before the Revolution several times. These sayings were obviously taken mainly from two books which even to this day are regarded as the most authentic sources because these are based on the personal notes of Ramakrishna's pupils—namely, the book of reminiscences of Mahendranath Gupta and Ramakrishna's biography by Swami Saradananda.<sup>14</sup>

The said book of Max Müller was printed in Russian in Moscow in 1913.<sup>15</sup> The translation was made by I. F. Nazhivin, the well-known litterateur and publicist, interested in the religious beliefs of the peoples of Eastern countries. A translation of some excerpts from the same book was also published in June 1913 issue of the bi-monthly Moscow journal '*Bulletin of Literature and Life*', which aimed at acquainting the Russian reader with the most important works of Russian and foreign literature. The excerpts published in the *Bulletin* did not mention the name of the translator, but the translator's Preface observed that, with all the scantiness of materials on the religious-philosophical life of the peoples of the East, the passages from the works of Indian thinkers still 'reach us, in all their naively profound purity,<sup>16</sup> though through translation, but without any special commentaries.'

## MESSAGE OF RAMAKRISHNA

Next year, viz. in 1914, was published a large volume under the title *Message of Ramakrishna*, the most voluminous (about three hundred pages) work on Ramakrishna in the pre-Revolution literature. From the preface of Swami Abhedananda (a pupil of Ramakrishna) to this volume, it is clear that the book was based on the notes taken by the pupils of the famous preceptor and published first in Bengali and later translated into English. Abhedananda's preface also gave the reader information on the history of the familiarity of the Europeans with Ramakrishna's heritage. It also gave a short exposition of the most important points of the teaching. 'For

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the first time in the literature of the world Ramakrishna showed with absolute certainty,'—wrote Abhedananda, — 'that all religions are like paths leading to the same goal and that the attainment of the same omnipotent Being was the highest ideal of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, the religions of Zaruthastra, and also of all other religions in this world.'<sup>17</sup> The name of the translator is not mentioned in this publication too; but one can readily see the translator's good knowledge of the religious situation in the country—this is seen from the annotations supplied by the translator to the main text. The book also contains an alphabetical index.

The next to be published on Ramakrishna in Moscow was a small, 46-page sketch (1915).<sup>18</sup> About one-third of this is occupied by Ramakrishna's biography. The other, that is, the larger part consists of his precepts and sayings grouped under various themes (wisdom, belief, renunciation etc.). It is possible that this writing was based on the work of Max Müller mentioned earlier, for the text itself does not mention the name of the author or the sources from which he took his materials.

This is all that is known to us of the writings on Ramakrishna and publication of his sayings in Russia before the Revolution.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN RUSSIAN

It is generally believed that the name of his pupil, Vivekananda, first appeared on the pages of American newspapers in 1893—in Boston, not long before the opening of the World Congress of Religions.<sup>19</sup> In Russian he was first published in 1907—this was a translation of his speech *My Teacher* (devoted to Ramakrishna)<sup>20</sup> given by him in New York. The anthology of articles in which this speech was published had been edited by the already mentioned I. F. Nazhivin. Within a year thereafter Nazhivin brought out one more anthology where he included two more writings of Vivekananda—*God and Man* and *Hymn of Creation*.<sup>21</sup> This second anthology was entitled *Voices of Peoples* and contained articles throwing light on the religious teachings of peoples of the world,—including topics like the

history of *Dukhobors*, development of Babid movement etc. In his annotations to Vivekananda's writings, Nazhivin noted that during the last decades 'there have been rising deep and wide currents amongst the peoples in India, aimed at purifying the great centuries-old teachings of Buddhism and Brahmanism from all sorts of interpolations and superstitions. Swami Vivekananda, a pupil of Sri Ramakrishna, is one of the brilliant representatives of these great religious currents.'<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, one does not get the impression that I. F. Nazhivin had any profound insight into the nature of changes then taking place in Hinduism.

These were the earliest works of Vivekananda published in Russia; but later, from 1907 to 1917, a lot on him was published in Russian. The Russian reader was thus able to familiarize himself with Vivekananda's lectures given by him in America in 1895-1896—*Karma-yoga*, *Raja-yoga*, *Bhakti-yoga*, *Jnana-yoga*.<sup>23</sup> Much can be said about these publications from the standpoint of modern research. As a rule, these did not mention the name of the translator, were published in a very small number of copies, at places far from the traditional centres of Oriental studies, and were the outcome more of enthusiasm and passion for Indian religious-philosophical thought than any training in Indology.

No other early writings in Russia on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, even if there be, are known to us. There is no doubt that there was great enthusiasm in Russia for the teachings both of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda right from the beginning of the present century. And, whenever any new excerpts from their creative heritage were published, the publisher and the translator invariably regretted how little the works of Indian thinkers were being translated into Russian. All these publications are now a bibliographical rarity, and the titles of some of these have to be taken only from bibliographical descriptions. It is difficult to find an individual possessing a full collection of pre-Revolution Russian publications of the works of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Even the

largest research libraries of Moscow do not have all the books of these thinkers published before 1917. The employees of the libraries keep these old publications with care, and prefer to give for consultation only xerox or microfilm copies of these, and those too only to such readers as are seriously interested in the spiritually creative work of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. When one takes in one's hand these old, fairly brittle books so cheaply priced at that time, one cannot get over one's excitement over one more evidence of man's tireless, strenuous quest for 'true' knowledge. Of course, the past three-quarters of the century have changed much in the approach of the Russian research scholar and also of the ordinary Russian reader to the quests of the famous Indian reformers of religion. A scientific analysis of the creative heritage of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda makes it possible to present an adequate, all-sided, well-established interpretation of the substance of their teachings and to give an authentic assessment of their place in the spiritual life of India. Even today, we Russians feel deeply touched by very first familiarity with eminent representatives of the intellectual life of India, by the interest of the Russian public in their understanding of the most important, 'eternal' questions of philosophical interpretation of the world and human mission. This is one more sign of that confusion and expectation which the pre-Revolution period was full of; this is also the evidence of that deep respect which the philosophical culture of India has always enjoyed in the eyes of the thinking peoples of Russia; this is also the expression of those hopes for profound vital changes the fulfilment of which was then, for many persons, associated with the possessing of 'Eastern wisdom' and teachings of sages and philosophers of India.

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# ROLE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN REFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION OF HINDUISM

A. A. TKACHEVA

**T**HE success of modernization of any religion, its adaption in all its functions to the needs and realities of the day, depends on how fully all its constituent elements and structures are involved in this process. The attempts by various thinkers, state or social leaders to re-examine the ideological content of a religion are, history testifies, doomed to failure if these are not accompanied by corresponding changes in the remaining rungs of religious complex, particularly in the system of religious organizations and relations between those engaged in the service of religion and the masses of believers. Without the acceptance of the new interpretation of the dogma by a fairly considerable number of religious leaders and without their willingness to embody these in their practical work, any innovations in the sphere of ideological content of religion, even those responding essentially to their own basic needs of social and spiritual development, do not go beyond the confines of the origin of merely a new religious-philosophical school or a narrow sect, as a rule, not surviving for long the death of its founder.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: CRUSADER FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE DOWNTRODDEN

One of the factors, a great deal conducive to the fact that the ideas of the great Swami Vivekananda, the 'apostle of non-conformism and a crusader for the rights of the down-trodden', took firm roots in the social consciousness of India, and also beyond her boundaries, was the reforms carried out by him in the system of religious organization proper, which resulted in the emergence of one of the earliest religious esta-

blishments of modern type in Hinduism, the Ramakrishna Mission. One cannot but agree with the view of V. K. R. V. Rao, expressed in his book *Swami Vivekananda: the Prophet of Vedantic Socialism* that Ramakrishna Mission is his [Vivekananda's] greatest practical contribution to the building up of 'new India'.<sup>2</sup> The organizational principles and trends of the work of the Ramakrishna Mission have determined in many respects the present character of modern religious organizations in Hinduism. The Mission has become a model of its kind for a whole multitude of organizations of the followers of modernized teachings emerging later, for example, Swami Sivananda's Divine Life Society formed in 1936.<sup>3</sup>

The practice of the religious preceptor and his disciples living together under one roof existed in India even in the most ancient times. The role of such, at times short-term, association of the 'seekers of truth' as an important factor in the spiritual life of the country at that time had been noted by many scholars, emphasizing that orations of the propounders of various faiths enjoying the greatest popularity were listened to with attention by the rulers of the earliest Indian States.

#### CENTRES FOR HINDUISM

Such associations of disciples around the religious preceptor have since become the centres of development of religious-philosophical thought of Hinduism, having retained this function from the most ancient times to our days. Religious-philosophical debates were organized at such centres, and many Hindus came to listen to these; the heads of the centres delivered discourses and it was mainly in these that the esoteric cult practices of Hinduism—yoga, methods of meditation etc.—were largely developed.

In our view, precisely these associations of followers around the preceptor (there is no doubt that the Mission, when established, was just such an association of Swami Vivekananda and his closest associates) largely carried out the most vital function of reviving the confessional system, realized in the

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course of sermons and preceptorship at a time when the priesthood acted mainly as the conservative and stabilizing system of power. The absence, in Hinduism, of any universally accepted Canon and any centralized religious organization was on the one hand, correlated to specifically Hinduist form of rigid religious control and integration through caste as a religious-social institution and the role of the temples as the preservers of religious traditions. On the other hand, it revealed a considerable freedom of outlook for the interpretation of the dogma. The place of a person in the relations of 'priest and the family group (sub-caste)' as also in the relations of 'priest and visitors to the temples' was determined by right of birth, by religious duties, and in many cases some variety or the other of the religion of Hinduism arising from it was regarded as something present once and for all.

### RELATIONS OF GURU AND DISCIPLES

The relations of the guru and the disciples in their character differed substantially from caste relations. The association of the disciples around the preceptor was and is of a voluntary character; and is, in many cases, not linked with the 'right of birth' characteristic of the traditional society. While in the case of caste we are concerned with the merging of social and religious institutions, the 'teacher-disciples' system is of the nature of a religious group, separated from the secular forms of social organizations, having its own hierarchy of authority, distribution of roles, and methods of influence. In this sense, the caste and the association of disciples around the teacher are polar types of religious formations, though remaining within the orthodox Hinduism in a mutually complementary position. 'On the one pole is the complete concurrence of the two associations, on the other is an equally complete contrast.'<sup>4</sup> Without doubt, the second type corresponds far more to the method of organization of religion in a bourgeois secular society.

Further, unlike the caste structure, with its forced religiosity so characteristic of the traditional society, and accent not so

much on the content of religious consciousness as on the observance of necessary ceremonies, ritual purity etc., the associations of the pupils around the preceptor were of a purely voluntary nature in the name of inner religious perfecting of the members, thus being a ready model for achieving the principle of freedom of choice, characteristic of the religious consciousness of the modern developed society and inherent in the 'bourgeois variety'<sup>5</sup> of religion by the primacy of the inner faith over the ritual.

Lastly, the very fact of emergence of a new association of disciples around the religious preceptor is most often the result of the appearance of a new interpretation of the doctrine or of the replacement of some accents in the already existing interpretation. In cases where the doctrinal innovations were accompanied by changes in the sphere of the ritual, there arose the need for an organizational formulation of the new association, realized in the *ashrama*.

In view of what has been said above, it seems quite natural that Swami Vivekananda's mind turned precisely to this form of organization of the followers of a Hinduist faith—to the association of disciples around the charismatic religious preceptor.

For him, as a religious leader and a sanniyasi who had undergone religious preceptorship under one of the most distinguished religious preceptors of India of the nineteenth century, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, there definitely was no need to invent any form of religious institution hitherto unknown to the Hindus, as, for instance, attempted by the layman, Rammohun Roy. One cannot but observe as well the circumstance (undoubtedly obvious for Swami Vivekananda as a unique propagandist of the ideas of Hinduism beyond the frontiers of India) that the absence of direct dependence on the form of the structure of the society and the freedom of interpretation of the doctrine would enable an association of disciples around the teacher to adapt itself successfully not only to the conditions of the developing society but also to the conditions of the western states.

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### ROLE OF THE SANNYASI

The most important part of any association of the followers around the preceptor, or, one may say, its nucleus, is the *sannyasi*—the Hinduist equivalent of monk—who, for achieving religious perfection, has performed the rites of renunciation of the world (*sannyasa*). Within the confines of this institution of *sannyasa* formed approximately in the middle of the first millenium B.C., there took shape a system proper of values, as an alternative to the secular, the foremost of which was liberation from the fetters of the phenomenal world, and a religious hierarchy proper, different from the caste hierarchy, depending upon whether the member of a particular association of *sannyasis* is its founder—the preacher of the ‘original’ path to freedom or whether he joined it later as a disciple, and on the extent to which a *sannyasi* is close to his guru, and on the period of his stay in the *ashrama*.

With all the concrete diversity of the system of organization of *sannyasis* in various currents of ancient and medieval Hinduism, it was, in our view, determined, on the whole, by the following features:

(1) Religious-cultic practices of the *sannyasi* were of an esoteric nature, and all the details of the teaching of the guru and the respective ritual were, as a rule, known only to the narrow circle of persons, in some cases not even to all the *sannyasis*, not to speak of the lay disciples. The membership of the latter in the association, was, generally speaking, fairly conditional and most often restricted to receiving from the teacher a special sacred formula, a *mantra*, and to material offerings, interpreted as a religious service.

(2) Unlike the Christian or Buddhist monks, the *sannyasis* did not take up any philanthropic or pedagogical work. A *sannyasi* was supposed to be completely disinterested in mundane affairs and to direct all his thoughts to a mystic union with the deity. This last principle, it is true, was demolished by the will of historical circumstances: it is known, for instance, that armed *sannyasis* (*gosvami*) put up an extremely long and

persistent resistance to British troops in late eighteenth century in Bengal, in the same way as the orthodox monks in Russia fought with arms at the time of Mongol-Tatar attack.

(3) Embracing *sannyasa* for a Hindu meant a break with all family and caste obligations, his 'death' for everything secular, and his freedom from all obligations for observance of the norms of caste purity. Accordingly, the *sannyasis* themselves were for the lay Hindus ritually 'defiled ones'. For a *sannyasi* to return to the 'world' was not possible in principle, for he was punished more cruelly than in other religions in such cases: a *sannyasi* 'unfrocked' would have been in the position of an untouchable *pariah*. Admittance to the secret doctrine, to what was regarded as the highest meaning and the highest virtue of religious faith, was not only accompanied by the exclusion of its bearers from the sphere of active social life but also reduced to minimum their extra-religious contacts with laymen.

(4) Investigating, in the beginning of this century, the system of organization of the *sannyasis* of the orthodox Vedantist school, J. Farquhar discovered a number of following circumstances<sup>6</sup>: Its present state did not correspond to the earlier regulations concerning the *varna* affiliation of persons for whom it was possible to take *sannyasa*. According to the source *Vaibhanasa Dharma Prasna* (third century A.D.) quoted by him, only Brahmins could become *sannyasis*. But the majority of institutions studied by him had representatives of all *varnas*, including also *sudras*. Accordingly, the *varna* affiliation was in practice no hindrance to becoming a *sannyasi*. Although, amongst the *sannyasis* (in any case, in a number of their associations), there were also specific *varna* differences, these were hardly as important as in the society of laymen. The rank of a *sannyasi* in the religious hierarchy was determined mainly by the magnitude of religious virtue imbibed by him and the extent of his nearness to the head of the *ashrama*. The associations of *sannyasis* were thus sorts of islets of religious egalitarianism in the sense of equality of opportunities of the believers for attaining the highest religious aim in the Hindu society,



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the fundamental principle of whose outlook was just religious inequality among the representatives of various castes.

### ISOLATION FROM THE MASSES

However, the sannyasis were rigidly—both by the radical nature of the principle of renunciation and also because of the barrier of their own ritual ‘impurity’—isolated from the lay masses. We suppose this isolation of professional religious leaders played no small role in the fact that medieval Hinduism did not give rise to militant egalitarian movements under religious slogans, like those movements, for instance, which were observed in Christian Europe. As observed by F. Engels, we see that egalitarian christian heresies in medieval Europe appeared exactly amongst the democratic, plebeian clergy, who kept close contacts with those social strata from which they had come.<sup>7</sup> From this we can conclude that democratization of any current in Hinduism, had, in particular, to have as its component part the removal of sharp opposition between the regulations and interests of religious leaders and laymen, and the growth of their human contacts proper.

### ORGANIZING THE SANNYASIS

It is obvious that such Coming together could not take place amongst the Brahmin priests and non-Brahmins, for the highest place in the social hierarchy, and the income, of the former were secured just by their specialized position and monopoly for sacred knowledge. The sannyasis had no real advantages from their isolation. Besides, they came from different *varnas* and, in their relations with the laymen, were not to be (at least, theoretically) guided by caste regulations. The very principle of renunciation, requiring complete indifference to everything that did not concern the sphere of spiritual-religious quest, was hardly not the main obstacle between the sannyasis and the laymen.

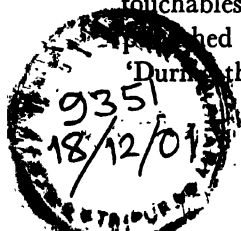
The most radical innovation, therefore, introduced by Swami Vivekananda in organizing the life of the sannyasis

was the removal of just this sharp contrast between the tasks and aims of the sannyasis and of laymen, finding its embodiment in the doctrine of social service of the sannyasis. Swami Vivekananda's main thesis, justifying the secular work of the sannyasis, was that all people, particularly the poor, are the manifestation of the divine source, and service to them is accordingly a form of divine service. 'The work without a desire for the reward above all deserves all praise, but one becomes a sannyasi not to become free from the obligations enjoined upon him by life', said Swami Vivekananda. 'Taking upon oneself more wider responsibilities of service to the whole society instead of concern simply for one's family,—here is true virtue. The most despising moment in the existing system of order of monks is the acceptance of sanyas as a means of getting away from all useful work...'.<sup>8</sup>

#### SANNYASIS AND SOCIAL SERVICE

The service to society by the sannyasis, according to Swami Vivekananda's views, must proceed in two main directions: first, by active spread and propagation of religious teaching amongst the various strata and categories of the population; secondly, by organizing educational and philanthropic establishments and working in them.

Both these directions meant a principally new role for the sannyasis. Their medieval orders were the citadels of the most active followers of Hinduism, but they never set themselves the task of active propagandist and proselytic aspirations characteristic of the monks of other religious orders. The second direction—philanthropic and pedagogical work—aroused particular indignation of the orthodoxy over the fact that Vivekananda's sannyasis, partly belonging to higher castes, should 'stoop' to the service of persons of lower castes, untouchables, and representatives of other confessions.<sup>9</sup> An article published in the journal of the Math, *Vedanta Kesari*, observed: 'During the first decade of this century, the traditional monks



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despised the monks of Ramakrishna's movement for helping the sick and the poor. It was thought that they were betraying the monastic ideal of passive contemplation of the great spirit. . . .'<sup>10</sup> The growth of relations with the laymen and, accordingly, the growth of popularity and material base of the organization, however, made the representatives of traditional institutions change their attitude to the work in the world. Of late, a number of institutions of sannyasis following wholly the orthodox line in Hinduism,—for example, the Saivite Dharmapuram Adhinam Math with its headquarters in Mayuram; the Sarada Pith in Dwarka, and Kanchi Kama-koti Pith in Tanjore founded by Sankara, have started their own educational establishments, hospitals, and generally show a growing interest in social life.<sup>11</sup>

Before the reforms taken up by Swami Vivekananda in the life of the sannyasis, their dwelling place, called *ashrama*, *math*, *asthal* or *akhada*, looked more frequently as described by H. H. Wilson in his book *Religious Sects of the Hindus*: It consisted of a dwelling for the head of the *ashrama*, huts for his disciples, a temple of the deity whom they worshipped, or the shrine of the founder guru, and also a *dharmasala*—a place for the pilgrims who regularly visited the place. The place was under the complete control of its head. Many such establishments had endowments of land, and their material base was thus formed not only from donations from the believers but also from the income received from the land.<sup>12</sup>

An institution of sannyasis in the medieval period was, in all probability, like this: some of its members remained on pilgrimage to sacred places; the establishment, in its turn, was visited by the followers of other teachers, who also sometimes stayed here for fairly long periods of time. Characterizing associations of the medieval times, Max Weber concludes: 'Apparently the systematic organization into communities with fixed rules was still lacking. Purely personal relations, formed the basis of cohesiveness, so far as such was present,'<sup>13</sup> that is, the relations of the teacher and the disciple, whose

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sacral character compensated, as it were, for the want of a sufficiently clear-cut formal organization.

### REFORM OF THE LIFE OF THE SANNYASI

As a result of the measures undertaken by Swami Vivekananda for reform of the life of the sannyasis, and more broadly, of the whole religious organization of such kind in Hinduism, the modern establishment acquired a far more complex structure, including the following sub-divisions: a religious-cultic complex proper (temples, a place for worship or a shrine of the deferential guru), a place for the monks of the order (*math*) and for the visitors to the *ashrama*, the administrative wing, publicity wing, and social-philanthropic complex, including various types of charitable, educational, and teaching institutions.

### WORSHIP OF THE PRECEPTOR

The curious fact is that, in modern establishments, the focal point of their religious-ritual practice is more frequently the worship of the deified religious preceptor and not of any deity. In the case of the Ramakrishna Mission, worship is offered to Swami Vivekananda and his guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Although the doctrinal positions and the work of the Mission are virtually a development of the ideas just of Swami Vivekananda, his cult in the organization is expressed far more feebly than that of Ramakrishna: Swami Vivekananda is rather regarded an 'apostle' of Ramakrishna than as the founder-guru. Vivekananda himself is to a considerable extent responsible for such a situation, for he all along emphasized the fact of his discipleship under Ramakrishna. It is just Ramakrishna who is, by the representatives of the Mission, called '*Vedamurti*'—'the form [embodiment] of sacred knowledge' and regarded as an incarnation of divine wisdom and love in human form for the spiritual revival of mankind.

All sections of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, as also other non-traditional Hinduist organizations

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for whom they serve as model, invariably have large graphic or sculptural representations of the founder-gurus. In temples, the service conducted is devoted to them; and even temples too are often raised in their honour. There exist temple of Ramakrishna, Swami Sivananda, Ramana Maharshi and others like them.

The cultic practices in the organizations of reformed Hinduism is organized order and, what is principally important for the bourgeois variety of religion, presupposes direct participation in these of all the members present of the organization. In the branches of the Ramakrishna Mission, there are hymns sung in chorus in honour of Ramakrishna (many of these composed by Swami Vivekananda); group meditation practices, offerings of flowers and sweets to the deities and founders of the organization. Swami Vivekananda's familiarity with the religious needs of the western intelligentsia as a result of his travels in countries of Northern America and Western Europe led him to realize the need for differentiating between the religious practices of the Mission depending upon the composition of the members of the particular branch. Thus, in the foreign branches of the Mission, the ritual part, as a rule, is curtailed in favour of lectures of religious-philosophical nature and discourses between the guru and the members of the society. In India, on the other hand, because of the more traditional character of the consciousness of the masses, the ritual continues to have a very great significance in the functioning of the various branches of the Mission, which observe all important holy festivals of the Hindus, like Durga puja, Navaratri, etc., attracting lakhs of people in their branch.<sup>14</sup>

### SANNYASIS AND THE MISSION

The sannyasis are the guiding team in all sub-sections of the Mission as well as of the non-orthodox organizations formed on its model. True, one has to take note here of the view of the American scholar of religion, G. M. Williams, that the relatively small number of order of monks compared with the wide-

ranging activity of the Mission creates for it considerable difficulties which, in the ultimate end, would lead to the transfer of management in a number of spheres of work of the organization (above all, in philanthropic and educational) to the hands of the lay members.<sup>15</sup>

A special place in the structure of the Mission, as also of other non-orthodox Hinduist organizations, is occupied by the publicity apparatus. One of the most important innovations introduced by the reformers of Hinduism, particularly by Swami Vivekananda, into this religion was active propagandist effort. This effort was, in quite a natural way, supplemented by de-esoterization of that knowledge which was earlier accessible only to Brahmins and sannyasis—viz. philosophies of the Upanishads, works of distinguished Hindu philosophers, various systems of yogic practices, etc. A great place in the work of the Mission and other similar establishments of modern Hinduism is accordingly occupied by publishing and translation activity, aimed at propagation of knowledge about Hinduism—about its philosophical systems, its mythology, its tradition of change in one's ownself, for the followers amongst the population of India as well as beyond her boundaries. The more educated sannyasis write commentaries on ancient religious sources, striving to interpret their positions in modern scientific and philosophical spirit. The translations of ancient Sanskrit masterpieces and of works of modern leaders of Hinduist organizations into Indian and foreign languages, and the publication thereof, stipulate the appointment in the Mission of special cadres of translators and editors, mainly from amongst the sannyasis. The Mission has its own publishing house and also a number of periodical publications coming out in several languages.

#### STUDIES ON INDIAN CULTURE

One service rendered by the Mission to be regarded as great is that it publishes and propagates not only religious-apologetical literature but also valuable studies in the field

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of Indian culture and history, comparative studies in culture and religion, philosophy and sociology. Many of its sannyasis are undoubtedly eminent scholars—specialists in various disciplines of humanities.

One more trend of the propagandist work of the Mission is the giving of lectures by its members both of religious-philosophical as well as of universal humanitarian character. For this purpose its leaders from amongst the sannyasis are often sent on publicity lecture tours to various places in India and abroad. The Mission also organizes conferences of various types—religious, including also the representatives of various confessions, as well as secular (for instance, on problems of culture, struggle for peace etc.).

The Mission, like other establishments of non-orthodox slant, also has wide international connections with religious as well as scientific and social organizations, and collaborates with them in the fields of culture, education, struggle for peace etc.

Currently, the Ramakrishna Mission (along with the organizations established on its model) is undoubtedly one of the most accurately and systematically operating teams in the whole system of ideological establishments for the propaganda and spread of the ideas of Hinduism in India as well as abroad. The Mission, as also the majority of other non-orthodox Hinduist organizations, have as a component part a whole complex of educational and charitable institutions. In their number and range of various levels of the process of education—from higher educational institutions to courses for removal of illiteracy in villages—the Ramakrishna Mission undoubtedly holds a place of pride. Besides, a greater part of its educational institutions imparts education mainly of secular character, including also natural sciences. The laymen are actively involved in the work of such institutions. The charitable institutions like hospitals, polyclinics, kindergartens, hostels for students of modest means, free kitchens, are an important part of social-philanthropic complex of Ramakrishna Mission and other organizations functioning on its model.

In medieval Hinduism, as we already noted, an establishment of disciples around the head of a religious organization was an extremely amorphous formation, with temporary staff, with no rules governing their membership. The development of contacts with laymen, the interest of the leaders of modern Hinduist organizations in keeping contacts with the representatives of the most diverse circles of population, and, lastly, their propagandist efforts have led to the strengthening of the structure of these organizations, to the formalizing of the membership of laymen and to developing what could be called a differentiated system of membership.

We shall note that the absence of formal membership of an establishment is in itself no obstacle to the participation—in its activity—by those who desire to do so by way of attending functions, lectures of spiritual-religious content and for the social work done by them. Thus, for instance, one of the sections of the Mission, replying to a request received for membership, wrote: 'We do not consider formal membership of the organization obligatory, specially in the absence of a branch at your place of stay. . . . Your main task should be meeting the guru who could give required guidance for meditation and attainment of God. . . .'<sup>16</sup>

The questions of formal membership are undoubtedly of interest in the following aspect: in all organizations associated with modernization currents in modern Hinduism, there are practically no restrictions on joining them. The caste, sex, nationality, or even religious affiliation are no bar for membership as a layman or for taking *sannyasa*. This access to the establishment for any person is principally a new thing associated with Swami Vivekananda's views on universalism of Vedantist teaching and its acceptability for the whole mankind, and basically distinguishes the modern establishments from the traditional.

#### BARRIER OF RENUNCIATION

The inclusion of all aforesaid components into the structure



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of the religious organization, and the involvement of laymen in it, made it possible for the sannyasis of the Ramakrishna Math to rise above the barrier of renunciation dividing the Hindu monks from the wide masses of believers. The renunciation of sannyasis of Ramakrishna Math was regarded as a means for fulfilling a double task—on the one hand, as the quickest way to the knowledge of God (the traditional aspect), on the other, as a mode of life and of feeling of peace, making it possible to render, by most complete means, free from egoistic and commercial thoughts, the best service to the poorest sections of the Indian population, and to publicize the ideas of Swami Vivekananda in India and abroad (the reformatory aspect). One of the leaders of the Mission, Swami Sambuddhananda, in his speech on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda birth centenary celebrations, stressed the unity of the two aspects of the task facing the members of the organization: 'This spirit of self-sacrifice or renunciation with which the monks of the Math are imbued resulting from their various kinds of *tapasya* (austerities) finds its expression in and through the multifarious humanitarian activities, absolutely selfless in character, which are the veritable expression of service. As repeatedly declared by Swami Vivekananda, the Order of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission is to serve a double purpose—salvation of one's own self and good of the world.'<sup>17</sup>

### SIMULTANEOUSLY INDIAN AND FOREIGN

In accordance with Swami Vivekananda's directions, the Mission has, from the very beginning, been regarding itself as an organization simultaneously both Indian and foreign. The spheres of its activity were quite clearly delineated by the regulation: In India, the Mission considers it its duty to participate in the processes of national integration and social transformation, to assist, though without directly interfering, in the political life, a definite line followed by government institutions, and in some cases to stimulate, by its own example, the adoption of official measures on various problems. Outside

the country, the Mission functions in two main directions—as a religious-educational and propagandist organization of neo-Hinduist slant, in principle neutral to social-political conditions of the country which is the arena of its activity, and as an international centre of studies in the field of humanities.

The reformatory approach to religious-philosophical heritage of India, the appeal not only to our own countrymen but also to the entire mankind on the whole, so characteristic of Swami Vivekananda, have determined, in general outline, the development of the ideology of the Mission even after the death of its founder. The actualization of the humanist content of various cultures of civilization, and a flexible and liberal approach to participation in its activity, explain the sympathies which the Mission has enjoyed from the side of such world-known writers as, for example, Aldous Huxley, Tennessee Williams, Christopher Isherwood, Somerset Maugham. An all round approval of its educational and cultural work was voiced by the eminent son of the Indian people, Jawaharlal Nehru, who personally inaugurated the new Institute of Culture of the Mission in 1961. This institution has indeed made a significant contribution to collaboration amongst the scientific and creative intelligentsia of India and other countries. The universalist ideas of the system of the cultural development of mankind, of the valuable unity of world cultural traditions and of the high ideal of universal human fraternity, as developed in its scientific research and practical-educational work, actively counter all versions of cultural chauvinism and cultural imperialism.

#### INFLUENCE OF CATHOLIC MONASTIC ORDER

In many publications of western authors devoted to Swami Vivekananda, one finds judgements stressing the influence exercised on him by the religious-reformatory activity of Catholic monastic orders and by the familiarity with their structure and trends of work. Not denying this influence in any way, we would like to note that any automatic borrowing from

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the experience of the Christian missions in India by itself would not have given substantial results without Swami Vivekananda's theoretical re-interpretation of the role and place of religious organizations in the social development of the country, as also without his using the forms, historically shaped in Hinduism, of associations of followers of some interpretation or the other of the doctrine. The most vital factor securing Swami Vivekananda's success in his reformatory work was his effort at a creative synthesis of the traditions of various times and people, of various historically-cultural communities, into a single whole, finding embodiment in the form of an organization—the Ramakrishna Mission. One cannot therefore but agree with one of the eminent leaders of the Mission, Swami Lokeswarananda, who writes: 'In many ways, the Ramakrishna Order is perhaps best suited to meet the challenge of this time. It does not discard the old values because they are old; similarly, it does not rush for the new ones because they are new. It makes a fine balance of the two, choosing only that which is essential. . . .'<sup>18</sup>

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9. We shall stress once again that such indifference of the sannyasis to division of laymen into "pure" and "impure" was completely justified from the point of view of religious dogma. A *sannyasi* in principle had to take food from the hands of any person, a Brahmin or a *sudra*.
10. G. Moffit, Varieties of Contemporary Hindu Monasticism,—"*The Vedanta Kesari*", Madras, vol. 57, 1960, no. 3, p. 134.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
12. H. H. Wilson, *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, Calcutta, 1958, pp. 25-7.
13. M. Weber, *The Religion of India...*, Glencoe, 1960, p. 156.
14. H. French, *op. cit.*
15. G. M. Williams, The Ramakrishna Mission: A Study in Religious Change,—in *Religion in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1960, p. 76.
16. H. French, *op. cit.*
17. Swami Sambuddhananda, Swami Vivekananda's Ideal of Renunciation,—in *Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 321.
18. Swami Lokeshwarananda, Ramakrishna Order of Monks: A New Orientation of Monasticism,—in *Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume*, Calcutta, 1963, p. 444.

## NEO-VEDANTIST ETHICS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

E. P. CHELISHEV

THE anti-colonial movement appearing in India in the first half of the nineteenth century in the form of natural protests, started acquiring a general national character by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. A new, radically-nationalistic trend started taking shape in it. In the sphere of ideology the 'cropping up of radical nationalism,'—as E. N. Komarov observes,—'resulted in the emergence of anti-capitalistic views and social conceptions of subjective, utopian character, which in a great or small measure reflected the moods of the masses, their natural protest against the intensification of exploitation and destruction in the process of development of capitalism, particularly tormenting in colonial conditions.' We can, in the light of these ideological shifts taking place in the late nineteenth century India, look into the views and activity of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)<sup>1</sup>, whose moralistic sermons were inseparably related to social and political problems and whose views reflected the new traits of moral consciousness developed in the process of gradual transformation of the feudal moral relations into the bourgeois.

### VIVEKANANDA: AIM-ORIENTED REFORMER

Vivekananda was a zealous, aim-oriented reformer of democratically-nationalistic type. Depending upon the usual moral concepts and images, he concentrated his attention on 'inner' moral-religious aspects of Hinduism. In his view, only these could become the source of socially-oriented ethical consciousness. Criticizing orthodox Hinduism, Vivekananda did not raise the question of escape from the confines of religion. Considering as his main aim the attainment of independence

and democratic social emancipation of the masses on whom he placed great hopes,<sup>2</sup> Vivekananda turned to moral-religious precepts, related mainly not to 'outer', ritualistic, but to 'inner' religious precepts which, in this thinker's view, form the basis of the vital activity of the Indians. It is they who have ultimately to become the means of their social and national emancipation.

Proceeding from the position of conditionality of morality on religion, Vivekananda understood the mutual relationship of religion and morality on two levels. The outer ritualistic aspect of religion (Hinduism) and the morality connected with rituals represent one level and the morality conditioned by 'inner' aspect of religion, that is, by metaphysical positions proper of Vedanta—another. It is this latter, 'inner' aspect of Hinduism, which Swami Vivekananda had in view when he wrote: 'My aim is to show that the highest ideal of morality and unegoisticness are inseparably linked with the highest metaphysical conception.'<sup>3</sup> Only Advaita, in the view of the thinker, is in a position to give a satisfactory explanation of the principles of morality, and to reveal its true essence. Of primary significance, for Vivekananda, was the morality conditioned by 'inner' aspect of religion.

Vivekananda's efforts to orient his countrymen towards the 'inner' aspect of religion were linked with the formation of introvert character, of moral consciousness, as its most important trait which in many ways surfaces during the period of growth of capitalism.<sup>4</sup> An impression may be formed that, focussing his attention on the motif of conduct and even specially identifying the 'inner' stratum of religious morality, Vivekananda on the whole remains embedded in the traditions of the *Bhagavadgita* which pays great attention to the inner world of man, to the world of his thoughts and motifs.

#### USE OF VEDANTIST PRINCIPLES

But Vivekananda does not simply follow the ancient traditions of the *Bhagavadgita*. The introvertness of moral conscious-

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ness which Vivekananda is guided by, had a qualitatively new level, associated above all with the assertion of personality as a source of initiative, choice, and action, with reassessment of its role and significance in society. In the process of reassessment and reinterpretation of this role, Vivekananda makes use of the Vedantist categories and principles. The position about the unity of transcendental and immanent spiritual source, expressed in the ancient aphorism 'You alone are with that' was one of the Vedantist positions on which Vivekananda relied on, seeing in it the kernel of morality, the characterization of its essence.

Through realization of his inner divine 'I', a man, according to Vivekananda's view, develops the same attitude to other people as personally to his own self. Hinduism, wrote Vivekananda, teaches that '...each individual soul is a part and parcel of that Universal Soul, which is infinite. Therefore in injuring his neighbour the individual actually injures himself. This is the basic metaphysical truth underlying all ethical codes.'<sup>5</sup>

The realization of the single spiritual source of the whole being, from Vivekananda's viewpoint, is the key to the understanding of general writs of morality, its categories and principles. Even the concept of morality, therefore, must, in the view of the thinker, include this consciousness of the single spiritual substance. 'The Vedanta,'—Vivekananda said in his speech at Boston,—'claims that there has not been one religious inspiration, one manifestation of the divine man, however great, but it has been the expression of that infinite oneness in human nature; and all that we call ethics and morality and doing good to others is also but the manifestation of this oneness.'<sup>6</sup>

## APPROACH TO MORALITY

Vivekananda approaches the concept of the essence of morality also through the category of selflessness. His definition of morality is reduced to the following: 'Every selfish action,

therefore, retards our reaching the goal, and every unselfish action takes us towards the goal; that is why the only definition that can be given of morality is this: *that which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral.*'<sup>7</sup> Essentially, Vivekananda regards egoism and selflessness as universal categories of ethics and virtually appraises them in the given context as corresponding to the universal dichotomy of good and evil. The sources of such interpretation of egoism and selflessness should be sought in religious-idealist traditions of Vedanta, according to which selflessness is associated with the urge and realization of the divine essence immanently inherent in each person, with the consciousness of the unity of the spiritual substance in everything existing, and egoism is represented as a loss of this unity resulting from identification of inner divine essence with the mental, psychic, and physical being of man. Vivekananda on the whole follows these traditions. Thus, he wrote: 'There is to be found in every religion the manifestation of this struggle towards freedom. It is the groundwork of all morality, of unselfishness, which means getting rid of the idea that men are the same as their little body.'<sup>8</sup>

Besides, in the treatment of the category of selflessness, the philosopher also introduced new, non-traditional features. The problem of egoism interested Vivekananda not so much in its speculative-metaphysical aspect, as in its practical aspect, conditioned by social-political changes taking place in India. He was concerned not with personality as an abstract unity, striving towards spiritual liberation—*moksha*—but with personality in its mutual relationship with society, affirming itself as an active member of the social whole. Perceiving the 'contradiction' proper between personality and society mainly as 'an evil of the *material* bourgeois West', Vivekananda believed that in India it could be overcome with the help of the so-called '*Indian spirituality*' (in which Vivekananda and other radical nationalists of late nineteenth century saw the distinctiveness of the country). In the sphere of this spirituality the thinker accentuated above all the position about the unity of immanent



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and transcendental spiritual source which served as the philosophical basis of its own kind of the category of greedlessness.

### GREEDLESSNESS AND EGOISM

In the *Bhagavadgita* greedlessness was regarded not only as implying renunciation of personal pleasures, profits, but also as linked with the ideal of liberation from the world. But for Vivekananda, greedlessness was mainly liberation from all those things in the world which are enriching the individual by 'wealth and money and power, and name and fame,'<sup>9</sup> and the very ideal of liberation acquired a new definition.<sup>10</sup> In other words, for Vivekananda, greedlessness was associated not with the non-acceptance of the world as such, but with non-acceptance of such state of society in which love for self and individualism would play the main role in moral-mutual relations between peoples. The tendency to 'warn', if not capitalism itself, then at least the contradictions inherent in it, filled Vivekananda's message with pathetic moral-religious content. Depending upon Vedic concepts, Vivekananda introduced the notions of egoism and greedlessness as under: There are 'two Sanskrit words. The one is *pravritti*, which means revolving towards, and the other is *nivritti*, which means revolving away. The 'revolving towards' is what we call in the world, the 'I and mine'; it includes all those things which are always enriching that 'me' by wealth and money and power, and name and fame, and which are of a grasping nature, always tending to accumulate everything in one centre, that centre being 'myself'. That is the *pravritti*, the natural tendency of every human being—taking everything from everywhere and heaping it around one centre, that centre being man's own sweet self. When this tendency begins to break, when it is *nivritti* or 'going away from', then begin morality and religion. Both *pravritti* and *nivritti* are of the nature of work: the former is evil work, and the latter is good work. This *nivritti* is the fundamental basis of all morality and all religion....'<sup>11</sup> Thus, Vivekananda associates *pravritti* directly

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with egoism and *nivritti* with the overcoming of it, with greedlessness. Accordingly, *nivritti*, as a principle contrasted with *pravritti* and organically associated with greedlessness, is, besides, such a moral principle that leads to the attainment of supreme moral ideals. Practising *nivritti* in his life, a man simultaneously subdues *pravritti*, that is egoism. The latter, as believed by Vivekananda, is achieved, in the process of realization by man of his divine essence, the consciousness of the position that all people in their true essence are one. Here man's consciousness itself of his divine essence already conditions, from Swamiji's point of view, the potential possibility of eradication of egoism. The thinker believed that '...as knowledge comes, man grows, morality is evolved, and the idea of non-separateness begins. Whether men understand it or not, they are impelled by that power behind to become unselfish. That is the foundation of all morality. It is the quintessence of all ethics, preached in any language, or in any religion, or by any prophet...'.<sup>12</sup> The very fact of realization of the main Vedantic positions, the most important of which was the position of unity of spiritual source, accordingly implied, in his view, the possibility of freedom from egoism. Besides, the eradication of egoism, in the views of the great thinker associated with change in consciousness, was for him not the 'enlightenment' of a *sadhu* who has renounced worldly cares and turned to meditative self-concentration. For him, it was necessarily associated with the active standpoint of a citizen.

### ATTAINMENT OF MOKSHA

Of the four ways of attaining liberation (*moksha*)—*bhakti-yoga*, *raja-yoga*, *jnana-yoga* and *karma-yoga*—Vivekananda particularly isolated the last of these, stressing that this alone was in the greatest measure conducive to the aims and tasks of the period contemporary to his. The basic principle of *karma-yoga*—the principle of greedless action—had been the focus of Vivekananda's attention. In his ethical views this principle was basically not simply a call for religious activity for the purpose

of attaining spiritual-moral level at which the confluence with *Atman* takes place, but as a call for activity which for him had a definite social-political slant. 'Let us work like brothers. . . '—wrote Vivekananda;—'the future of India depends on our common efforts.' The thinker visualized this future not only in the attainment of independence, but also in the building up, in the ultimate end, of an ideal social structure—'the empire of *shudras*'. His ideal was that of a *karma-yogi*, personifying greedlessness, bold, courageous and strong character, and called upon to solve problems mainly of day to day life. In the process of active practical work the *karma-yogi* must subdue *pravritti* and cultivate greedlessness in self. Asserting in the same way as B. G. Tilak did later, that *karma-yoga* occupies a key position in the *Bhagavadgita*, Vivekananda wrote: 'Those who work without any consciousness of their lower ego are not affected with evil, for they work for the good of the world. . . . This secret of *karma-yoga* is taught by the Lord Shri Krishna in the *Gita*.'<sup>13</sup>

#### ESSENCE OF MORAL IDEAL

The problem of egoism and greedlessness as one of the aspects of manifestation of the essence of morality, leads Vivekananda fully to an attempt to reveal the essence of man's moral ideal. The essence of the conception of 'real' and 'apparent' (usual, ordinary) man<sup>14</sup> which Vivekananda suggests in this context, consists in drawing a boundary line between the morally perfect personality and the ordinary person. He regards that man 'real' who has attained the moral ideal, realized his identity with *Brahman* (or *Atman*).

He regards 'apparent' every individual who has not achieved moral perfection. We thus see that the theological anti-individualism of the Indian philosopher is consistent, and is permeated with ethical motifs. The specific nature of this theological anti-individualism of Vivekananda is, above all, in its definite social-political trend, dictated in the ultimate count by the very development of Indian society, which was

followed also in the solution offered by the thinker to the problem of justice.

#### PROBLEM OF INDIVIDUALITY

With the help of the conception of a 'real' man, Vivekananda strove to find the definition of the ethical category of 'individuality'. He sees the latter not in real, objective physical and moral tasks, distinguishing one man from another, but in man's abstract realization of his identity with *Brahman*. It was just in this sense that on being asked at the Harvard University, as to how the concept of individuality is treated in Vedanta, Vivekananda asserted that 'the real individual is the Absolute.'<sup>15</sup>

Explaining the essence of 'real' man, Vivekananda wrote: 'The Real Man, therefore, is one and infinite, the omnipresent Spirit. . . . The Real Man, the Spirit, being beyond cause and effect, not bound by time and space, must, therefore, be free. He was never bound, and could not be bound. The apparent man, the reflection, is limited by time, space, and causation, and is, therefore, bound.'<sup>16</sup>

Considering that underlying any ethical theory is the striving for a 'real' man, Vivekananda wrote: 'All the great systems of ethics preach absolute unselfishness as the goal. Supposing this absolute unselfishness can be reached by a man, what becomes of him ? . . . The little personality which he had before is now lost to him for ever; he has become infinite, and the attainment of this infinite expansion is indeed the goal of all religious and of all moral and philosophical teachings.'<sup>17</sup>

The interpretation of the category of individuality is linked on the one hand with Vivekananda's non-acceptance of individualism in the form in which he observed it in the conditions of the bourgeois West, and on the other with the attempt to remain within the confessional limits, to talk of the unity of spiritual essence of man with *Brahman*. In the process of his vital activity, on the condition that the moral norms are observed, a man, according to Vivekananda's notion, is

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impelled towards that stage of perfection which consists in the merging of the individual and the universal spiritual source.<sup>18</sup>

### ROMANTICALLY UTOPIAN APPROACH

But it would be wrong to see here (as, incidentally, also in other cases) in Vivekananda, the confessional theoretician, the semi-orthodox theologian. The essence of the matter is just that 'working in half tones', and reaccentuating the meaning, he brings the socially significant elements to forefront in his ethics. His views contain the elements of a new, in many ways romantically utopian, approach to the solving of the problem of individuality. Associating inseparably the man and the society, directing his ideal of 'real' man against individualistic qualities of personality, Vivekananda dreamt of universal liberation, of the society of *jivanmuktas*.<sup>19</sup> The position of the Indian democrat about each person's yearning for acquiring the 'real' state was inseparably linked in his views with the calls for initiative for development of creative source and self-activity of the personality, which objectively led to the assertion of the ideal of the leader man.

### CATEGORY OF SELF-SACRIFICE

Vivekananda does not restrict himself to judgements on moral perfection of man, while striving to find out concrete steps which each man must take on his path to it. The moral perfection, in his view, is reached in the process of gradual self-sacrifice, denying first one's own egoistic narcissus aspirations and desires and thereby realizing one's unity with one's near and dear ones, then the narrow interests of the family in the name of interests of friends, and lastly, denying one's own-self, for the sake of the entire people, for the sake of one's homeland, for readiness to sacrifice everything, including one's own life for the sake of the good of all. Here, no single step of this sequence, leading in the ultimate end to the realization of the unity of all beings, must, in the thinker's view, be ignored, and a man, not capable of sacrificing himself for the sake of

his homeland cannot, from Vivekananda's viewpoint, come to the point of self-sacrifice for the good of the whole mankind. 'Every action of our lives',—wrote Vivekananda,—'the most material, the grossest as well as the finest, the highest, the most spiritual—is alike tending towards this one ideal, the finding of unity. A man is single. He marries. Apparently it may be a selfish act, but at the same time, the impulsion, the motive power, is to find that unity. He has children, he has friends, he loves his country, he loves the world, and ends by loving the whole universe.'<sup>20</sup>

The study of the category of self-sacrifice by Vivekananda goes beyond the confines of traditional Vedantism, to practical tasks of the reality contemporary to him. Of dominating significance for the Indian democrat was the positive moment of self-sacrifice, consisting in renunciation in the name of service, something that was undoubtedly new for the Indian ethics and had a predominant significance. A renunciation of this kind taking place in the process of active practical life and for the good of it, must, in his view, be inherent in persons following the path of *karma-yoga*. In Vivekananda the category of renunciation is imbued with social-political content. To him, as a patriot and democrat, it means mainly service in the name of universal welfare. Vivekananda's attention was concentrated on two forms of renunciation—the renunciation of the leader man, which the thinker associated with the stage of life of the *grihastha* ("householder"); and the renunciation of the 'sannyasi'.<sup>21</sup> His attitude to both forms of renunciation was not the same. Sometimes the thinker regarded them as synonymous, believing that both the 'householder' and the 'sannyasi' must be considered equally great, because every man who does his duty well deserves the highest praise.<sup>22</sup> Such positions played an important role in Vivekananda's outlook; besides, we also come across in him such statements where he shows preference for the renunciation of the sannyasi. Thus, Govind Chandra Dey, quoting the words of Sister Nivedita,<sup>23</sup> notes that Vivekananda compared the life of the 'householder' with dimmed

reddish-yellow light, and the life of the sannyasi with bright sunlight. But here one must take into account Vivekananda's dual attitude to sannyasis themselves; he had inherent in him the elements of traditional treatment of a sannyasi as a man having renounced all universally useful activity.<sup>24</sup> Thus, explaining the meaning of the word sannyasi, Vivekananda in one of his Boston lectures said: 'When a man has fulfilled the duties and obligations of that stage of life in which he is born, and his aspirations lead him to seek a spiritual life and to abandon altogether the worldly pursuits of possession... then he seeks the True, the Eternal Love, the Refuge. He makes complete renunciation (sannyasa) of all worldly position... wanders forth into the world to live a life of self-sacrifice and to persistently seek spiritual knowledge... he in his turn becomes a teacher and hands on to disciples... all that he can of wisdom and beneficence.'<sup>25</sup>

In Vivekananda's views on a sannyasi, one can clearly follow the line of thought which was the key line in the moral-religious sermon of the thinker. A sannyasi, from his point of view, must have inherent in him the mission of an enlightener, striving to liberate the masses from ignorance. The sannyasis for Vivekananda, are, mainly, the young men of India, the spokesmen and advocates of their own kind for the best future of the country, whose aim is to arouse the masses to activity, and to direct them to the struggle for material and spiritual revival of India. And in this context the thinker noted: 'I shall establish a Math to train young sannyasis, who will go from door to door and make the people realize their pitiable condition by means of facts and reasoning, and instruct them in the ways and means for their welfare, and at the same time will explain to them as clearly as possible, in very simple and easy language, the higher truths of religion. The masses in our country are like the sleeping Leviathan.'<sup>26</sup>

Thus, on the whole, in his attitude to the said two forms of renunciation, Vivekananda held quite a definite position. Recognizing the traditional sannyasa, the special 'sacred acti-

vity', Vivekananda, along with that new interpretation of the duty and the role of a sannyasi, helped in removing the boundary line between the secular and the religious activity, that is, created, in the ultimate end, a new hierarchy of types of activity, shifting to the first and foremost place the social, humanist activity, directed to development of national self-consciousness of masses, to the awakening of enthusiasm for national liberation.

In Vivekananda's outlook were reflected in a special way those main motifs which also took shape in the work of such eminent leaders and thinkers of national liberation movement as B. G. Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh. B. G. Tilak's accent undoubtedly was on the sermon of greedless action of the *karma-yogis*; he strove to direct the sannyasis onto the path of practical activity. Extremely noteworthy in this context is the testimony of the Indian scholar V. P. Verma, who writes that Vivekananda turned to Tilak with a call to restrict his worldly activity and devote his energy to the work of educating the masses and to religious revival. But Tilak replied that he would never follow the path of renunciation. Whatever social or spiritual work he might have to do, he would do it while living amongst the people as a 'householder'. Aurobindo Ghosh in the second half of his life arrived at the idea of the spiritual authority of a sannyasi, influencing with his religious activity the historical development of a nation.

#### 'MOKSHA' AND 'DHARMA' IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TREATMENT

In his works Vivekananda naturally paid great attention to the categories, directly proceeding from Vedantism. Such categories include above all the category of *moksha*. Examining the ethical aspect of *moksha*, Vivekananda defined it as 'complete freedom', 'freedom from any association with categories of good and evil'.<sup>27</sup> On attaining *moksha*, a man, in his view, acquires perfect morality, evaluating which Vivekananda noted: 'The man who is perfectly moral cannot possibly hurt anything or



anybody. . . . No one is more powerful than he who has attained perfect non-injuring. No one could fight, no one could quarrel, in his presence. Yes, his very presence, and nothing else, means peace, means love wherever he may be. . . . Even the animals, ferocious animals, would be peaceful before him.'<sup>28</sup> These considerations are some of the weakest places in his ethical views, for here Vivekananda loses touch with the real problems and the tasks of the actual contemporary situation.

The next category is that of moral duty, which acquires concrete expression in the conception of *dharma*. Vivekananda sub-divides *dharma* into two kinds—*jati dharma*, that is, the caste *dharma*; and *svadharma*, that is, the personal *dharma*. Defining these, Vivekananda wrote: 'The right and correct means is that of the Vedas—the *jati dharma*, that is, the *dharma* enjoined according to the different castes—the *svadharma*, that is, one's own *dharma*, or set of duties prescribed for man according to his capacity and position—which is the very basis of Vedic religion and Vedic society.'<sup>29</sup>

Vivekananda sees the cause of the impoverished position of his country in the fact that the *jati dharma* is not correctly understood by the higher castes, and that 'the basis of the *jati dharma* has been tampered with'. Noting that the arbitrary treatment of the *jati dharma* is a 'new evil, which has to be guarded against', Vivekananda wrote: 'They (implied here are the members of the higher castes.—author) think they know everything of *jati dharma*, but really they know nothing of it. . . appropriating to themselves all privileges, they are going to their doom! I am not talking of caste as determined by qualitative distinction, but of the hereditary caste system. I admit that the qualitative caste system is the primary one; but the pity is, qualities yield to birth in two or three generations. Thus the vital point of our national life has been touched; otherwise, why should we sink to this degraded state?'<sup>30</sup> Thus, acting as a staunch opponent of the position of the caste system in his time, what was undoubtedly significant in the then India, criticizing such features of this system as rigidity, lack of

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flexibility, privileged position of the higher castes, Vivekananda assumes that the revival of the true significance of *jati dharma*, which it supposedly had in ancient Indian society, will mean a real and sure boon to the country.<sup>31</sup>

### NON-ACCEPTANCE OF CASTE SYSTEM

The non-acceptance of the present position of the caste system, and the attempt at idealization of ancient caste obligations, was, in practice, not a return to strict hierarchism of feudal morality, to its orthodox, stringently regulated obligations. The social-economic and political processes taking place in India, and the changes introduced in the moral consciousness of the individual, left a definite imprint also on the mechanism of moral duty. The formation of bourgeois relations in India, taking place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, combined with the general intensification of the national-liberation movement, placed the individual in a situation where the moral choice became all the more complicated. Together with this, the process of formation of the more complicated mechanism of duty passed, breaking through the usual Vedantist concepts and notions.

### OPERATION OF THREE GUNAS

Examining the structure of *dharma* in its Vedantist interpretation, Vivekananda proceeds from the position of operation, in a man, in a great or small measure, of three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*,—which determine the formation of the qualities of a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shurda. 'With the prevalence of the *sattvika* essence,'—wrote Vivekananda,—'man becomes inactive and rests always in a state of deep *dhyana* or contemplation; with the prevalence of the *rajas*, he does bad as well as good works; and with the prevalence of the *tamas* again, he becomes inactive and inert....' 'The *sattva* prevailing, the man is inactive, he is calm, to be sure; but that inactivity is the outcome of the centralisation of great powers, that calmness is the mother of tremendous energy. That highly

*sattvika* man, that great soul, has no longer to work as we do with hands and feet—by his mere willing only, all his works are immediately accomplished to perfection. That man of predominating *sattva* is the Brahmin, the worshipped of all.’<sup>32</sup> Such is the quite fairly orthodox description given by Vivekananda of the qualities of a Brahmin. But, instead of stressing the *sattva* qualities and presenting their influence as the dominating one, Vivekananda believes that, in the times contemporary to him, priority should be given just to *rajas*. And in this connection he tries to establish the relativity of caste boundaries and caste obligations—of *jati dharma*. To the thinker it is important that one of the three aforesaid qualities dominate in a man mainly not on the strength of his birth in this or that caste but *depending upon the time and circumstances*. Thus, the thinker wrote: ‘...at times one or other of these qualities predominates in him in varying degrees, and it is manifested accordingly. Take a man in his different pursuits, for example: when he is engaged in serving another for pay, he is in Shudrahood; when he is busy transacting some piece of business for profit, on his own account, he is a Vaishya; when he fights to right wrongs, then the qualities of a Kshatriya come out in him; and when he meditates on God or passes his time in conversation about Him, then he is a Brahmin. Naturally, the thinker concludes, ‘it is quite possible for one to be changed from one caste into another.’<sup>33</sup> The concept of caste obligation appears in a considerably changed form in the present context. The justification of the relativity of caste limits, just as of caste obligation, shows that a more flexible mechanism of moral duty, in conformity with the new, ever more complicated social conditions, was being formed in the new circumstances. Affirming the relativity of caste obligation, Vivekananda thereby firmly approached the social-historical necessity of the individualized, relatively independent moral choice, which was characteristic for the bourgeois relations under making.<sup>34</sup>

Preparing the mechanism of caste obligations, Vivekananda

isolates from the main sub-divisions of *jati dharma* the duty of the Kshatriya, with the spirit of *rajas* predominant in him, presenting it as necessary, if not for all, at least for a majority of Indians. Here the very duty of a Kshatriya acquired a peculiar interpretation in Vivekananda. In the thinker's notion, the image of the Kshatriya was associated not so much with a warrior joining the fight against an enemy, as with the image of 'bold warrior in the battlefield of life'.<sup>35</sup> In other words, Vivekananda's judgements on the duty of a Kshatriya, on the need for the dominance of the spirit of *rajas*, had behind them essentially the urge to present the individual as the centre of social-political activity. '*Rajas*,' wrote Vivekananda, "is badly needed just now! More than ninety per cent of those whom you now take to be men with the *sattva* quality are only steeped in the deepest *tamas*. Enough if you find one-sixteenth of them to be really *sattvika*! What we want now is an immense awakening of *rajasika* energy, for the whole country is wrapped in the shroud of *tamas*. The people of this land must be fed and clothed—must be awakened—must be made more fully active.'<sup>36</sup> *Tamas* for Vivekananda was associated both with love of greed, avidity of 'higher classes', their political ineffectiveness in the task of the struggle against British colonisers, as well as with the ignorance of the masses. For the revival of the qualities of *rajas* he pinned his hopes on the masses of India, considering their education as the first step on way to nationalism and social emancipation. Addressing his followers, the young sannyasi Vivekananda said: 'Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, 'O ye brothers, arise! Awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!'<sup>37</sup> This new duty, which Vivekananda preached, testifies to the changes in moral consciousness, when the requirements of universal morality appeared mainly not in the form of caste writs, and were perceived not as stringently regulated obligations in which

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the greater role was played by purely external regulations and injunctions, but as direct inner task of the particular individual.

### GOOD AND EVIL

In accordance with the spirit of Vedanta, Vivekananda assumed that good and evil were attributes inherent in God. 'We now come to see', he wrote, 'that we can have the Personal God, the creator of this universe, who is merciful and also cruel... He is the good, He is the evil... And none can go beyond His law.'<sup>38</sup> But since, in Vivekananda's view, the attributes of God are also possessed by man, though respectively in a smaller measure, the good and evil are 'conventional expressions of soul' of each individual at a stage where the man has still not realized his divine essence. Here Vivekananda shows that 'evil is the most external coating, and good is the nearer coating of the real man, the Self', thereby stressing their peculiar unity.<sup>39</sup> The good and evil receive their practical expression in man's activity having mainly the quality of *rajas*; it is to this latter, as mentioned above, that Vivekananda assigns decisive importance in the period contemporary to him. As a Vedantist, the thinker believed that 'good for him who strives for *moksha*, is one; and good for him who possesses *dharma* is another'.<sup>40</sup> However, emphasizing the great role of *rajas* in the life of his countrymen, Vivekananda obviously contradicts his own statements on the relativity of good and evil for the sannyasi and for the 'householder', and essentially tries to give to the sannyasi such understanding of duty, good and evil which is peculiar just to the 'householder'. The thinker's judgements on the duties of the sannyasi and the 'householder' give grounds to assume that he discerns the objective criteria of good and evil as dictated by the contemporary reality. But underneath his judgments on the new image of sannyasi, Vivekananda is traditional. He believes that good and evil have their objectively idealistic criteria expressed in man's union with the divine essence (*Atman*) which is immanent and transcendental.

Along with the traditional Vedantist understanding of good and evil, one also sees in Vivekananda the tendency to treat these as identities of subjective and objective moments. Vivekananda believes that all assessments are made by some subject or the other and that there is no value outside these moral assessments. 'Life,' he wrote, 'is good or evil according to the state of mind in which we look at it, it is neither by itself. Fire, by itself, is neither good nor evil. When it keeps us warm we say, How beautiful is fire! When it burns our fingers, we blame it. Still, in itself it is neither good nor bad. According as we use, it produces in us the feeling of good or bad; so also is this world.'<sup>41</sup> Good and evil depend not only on the properties of the object but also on the person assessing the object and are in this sense subjective. This shows Vivekananda's definite concern with ethical relativism. But the thinker also points out the objectivity of good and evil. 'No permanent or everlasting good can be done to the world; if it could be done, the world would not be this world. We may satisfy the hunger of a man for five minutes, but he will be hungry again. . . . 'The sum total of the good things in the world has been the same throughout in its relation to man's need and greed.'<sup>42</sup> And further the philosopher continues: 'We cannot add happiness to this world; similarly, we cannot add pain to it either. The sum total of the energies of pleasure and pain displayed here on earth will be the same throughout.'<sup>43</sup> Good and evil, in Vivekananda's view, are in such a static, ever present ratio. This statement of the thinker's view, it seems, is clearly contradictory to his calls for selfless service for the good of the country. And Vivekananda indeed did not keep himself confined to the above-mentioned metaphysical approach to good and evil. Thus, in contradiction to this position, Vivekananda wrote: 'The result of every activity presupposes both good and evil. There is no good action in which there were no grain of evil. . . . We must do what brings the maximum amount of good and the least evil.' From here it is clear that inherent to

the thinker are also some elements of dialectical approach to the categories of good and evil. Both good as well as evil, from Vivekananda's viewpoint, are relative; it is only their mutual relationship which is absolute. What has been considered good can, in corresponding circumstances,—Vivekananda believes—become just the opposite and be regarded as evil. 'There are good and evil everywhere in this world,'—wrote he. —'Sometimes evil becomes good; but other times good becomes evil also.'<sup>44</sup> Vivekananda raised the question of the boundary line where good passes over to evil and vice versa. 'Let a man drink wine,' he wrote, 'in itself it is not bad, but let him go on drinking, and it will produce evil. . . .'<sup>45</sup> Here Vivekananda sees in the evil an objective necessity, inevitable for man and born of life itself. Observing that 'like smoke over fire, some quantity of evil is always hovering over the good', Vivekananda stresses that evil is thus an inevitable ally of good.

Showing the mutual relationship of good and evil, Vivekananda in his judgements goes further, considering that good is affirmed just by its contrast to evil. By overcoming the latter and cultivating a hatred for it, man arrives at the understanding of good. The character of man, as the thinker believes, is tempered by trials and hardships and by the evil which the man has inevitably to subdue in the process of his vital activity. Defining man's character, Vivekananda wrote: 'As pleasure and pain pass before his soul, they leave upon it different pictures, and the result of these combined impressions is what is called man's "character" . . . . Good and evil have an equal share in moulding character, and in some instances misery is a greater teacher than happiness.'<sup>46</sup>

Vivekananda's treatment of the categories of good and evil, marked by a whole range of original characteristics, not inherent in the traditional Vedanta, is also followed in his approach to the problem of subduing good and evil. Assuming, in accordance with Vedanta, that every man must strive to remove the contrast of good and evil in the process of realization of his divine essence, Vivekananda believed, and this is

important, that man remove this contrast, but only upon having the possibilities of realization of good, actively involving himself in the affairs of the world and displaying his strength and not weakness.

#### CATEGORIES OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS IN VIVEKANANDA'S ETHICS

The categories of strength and weakness, which occupy one of the prominent places in the ethical conception of Vivekananda, are inseparably linked with the basic idea of Vedanta about the divine essence of man. Proceeding from the standpoint of existence of divine source, in the empirical world inherent in the greatest measure in man, Vivekananda sees in it the source of strength and power of each individual. He wrote: 'What makes you cry, my friend? The whole strength is within you. Concentrate your all-powerful nature. . . . And the whole universe will be at your feet. Only the soul predominates, and not matter. Only the fools who identify themselves with their body, can cry: "weak, weak, how weak we are!" The spiritual strength contained in the realization of the unity of *Atman* in all being, not only inculcates in man a faith in his own great potentials, but also guards him against committing amoral deeds. Not having spiritual strength, that is experiencing spiritual isolation with *Atman*, identifying oneself with body proper, a man sets out on the path of all possible sufferings and calamities. 'Weakness', wrote Vivekananda, 'is the sole cause of all sufferings. We are unhappy because we are weak. We tell lies, steal, kill and commit other crimes because we are weak. We die because we are weak'.

The spiritual strength and weakness are defined by Vivekananda as universal categories which give the grounds for solving any problems connected with the vital activity of man. 'Strength,' he wrote, 'is the medicine for the world's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have when tyrannised over by the rich. Strength is the medicine that the ignorant must have when oppressed by the learned; and it is



the medicine that sinners must have when tyrannised over by other sinners.'47 'Know that all sins and all evil can be united in one word—weakness. Weakness is the motif of all sinful action. Weakness is the source of egoism. Weakness makes a man cause pain to others.'

But the content of the categories of strength and weakness in Vivekananda is not exhausted by their definition as being purely spiritual. As is known, the thinker repeatedly called upon his countrymen to be physically strong. Physical strength was often regarded by him as the threshold of spiritual strength. Training and strengthening his body, through physical strength, a man will more quickly attain spiritual strength. Vivekananda noted: 'First of all, our young people must be strong. Then comes religion. It is possible to be closer to heavens by playing football than studying *Gita*. If your muscles are much stronger, you will understand *Gita* better'.

Strength for Vivekananda is a complex formation, a peculiar identity of the inner and the outer, the spiritual and the physical. Along with this, it should be noted that, in this mutual relationship of the physical and spiritual strength, it is just the spiritual strength that, for the thinker, is the determining moment. 'Man has high moral qualities only when he realizes the identity of *Atman* in all being. Though physical strength assists and in some measure prepares the soil for the development of spiritual strength, it alone cannot lead to the accomplishment of moral actions. Physical strength is mainly a condition for realization of spiritual potentials. 'We talk of many things, like a parrot, but never do them,'—wrote Vivekananda,—'to say and not to do has already become our habit. What is the reason for this?—physical weakness.' Besides, one must also have in mind the fact that the strengthening of muscles which Vivekananda speaks of, was also, in the ultimate count, associated with the general Vedantist outlook of the thinker. For Vivekananda the Vedantist, the body is not an independent essence, it is also permeated by the single spiritual source. Vivekananda wrote: 'The majority of philo-

sophies in every country, especially in the West, have started with the assumption that these two, matter and mind, are contradictory existences; but in the long run we shall find that they converge towards each other and in the end unite and form an infinite whole....' 'We shall see,'—the thinker continues,—'that neither is the body antagonistic to the mind, nor the mind to the body, although we find many persons who think that this body is nothing.'<sup>48</sup> Thus, Vivekananda's call to be physically strong is, in the ultimate count, a requirement for strengthening the body just because it is inseparably linked with the spiritual substance and by perfecting it, man helps the development of this divine essence.

A man having spiritual and physical strength, mutually complementing and conditioning each other, is characterized by Vivekananda as an individual endowed with high moral qualities and optimistic faith in his potential possibilities. 'One should cultivate an optimistic temperament and strive to know God who is present in everything', wrote Vivekananda.—'If we sit folding hands and pondering over the imperfections of our body and spirit we shall understand nothing.' In this case Vivekananda criticizes the weakening role of religion. In the conditions of colonial dependence of India these ideas of Vivekananda were objectively directed to affirmation of such moral qualities of the individual as sense of one's own dignity, strength, confidence in one's possibilities etc. But Vivekananda's criticism was not indeed consistent, for he thought that it was only because of ignorance that people were unable to realize the 'true' principles of religious moral which in his view form the above-mentioned moral qualities.

In those cases where strength and weakness are seen by Vivekananda as motif of conduct, these are linked with the social-political views of the thinker. Thus, Vivekananda regarded weakness as the basis of all sinful actions, and regarded strength as the leading motif of moral actions, associating it with the task of national liberation and revival of the country. 'Our country,' he wrote, 'needs, at present muscles of iron,

nerves of steel, gigantic will which nothing can withstand...'  
 'We have already bowed our heads enough, there is no need  
 to cry any more, rise on your feet and become people...'  
 Such a position taken by Vivekananda was a complete contrast  
 to the views prevalent amongst the Indian population of  
 naively-meditative, fatal attitude to life, frequently supple-  
 mented by the apologetics of the colonial regime.

Vivekananda's standpoint about strength as the leading  
 motif of moral actions was associated by him also with the  
*idea of self-help* both of the individual as well as of the *nation*  
*as a whole*. The individual, on the strength of his divine source,  
 playing the main role in his spiritual and physical develop-  
 ment, is capable of functioning without external aid. But the  
 same divine source must also manifest itself in the nation.  
 Like Tilak and other Indian nationalists of the late nineteenth  
 and early twentieth centuries, Vivekananda saw that colonia-  
 lism was retarding the economic and particularly industrial  
 development of the country. Therefore, visualizing real patrio-  
 tism in tireless work on development of its industry, science,  
 education, Vivekananda wrote that one 'must not depend on  
 any *foreign help*. Nations, like individuals, must help themselves.  
 This is *real* patriotism. If a nation cannot do that, its time  
 has not yet come. It must wait...the new light must spread  
 all over India. With this end...[We] must work....'<sup>49</sup>

But in this context the main position about the presence  
 in man of divine potentials acquires in Vivekananda's sermons  
 and calls, a principally new significance, compared with the  
 traditional Vedanta, for the thinker advances to the first place  
 the worker, man and fighter, physically and spiritually strong,  
 capable of firmly facing the hardships and not passively medita-  
 ting, sunk in quietism.

The general humanist pathos of Vivekananda's ethical  
 views, consisting in the assertion of the value of human perso-  
 nality, human dignity, strength and possibilities of man as an  
 active member of the society, was determined by specific condi-  
 tions of social development in the environment of colonial

dependence, giving rise, together with class conflicts inherent in capitalism, to the growth of national self-consciousness, consolidation of various strata of society against colonial yoke, general growth of a sense of personality, sense of one's own dignity.'

ENDS AND MEANS : VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE

In so far as the majority of leading thinkers of India of the modern and contemporary period as a rule took indirect or direct part in the national liberation movement, exercising some influence or the other on it, they constantly pondered over the problem of the end and the means, violence and non-violence. This can be followed not only on the instance of M. K. Gandhi's outlook who paid the foremost attention to the solving of these questions, but also in B. G. Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh. The very ideology of national liberation movement firmly demanded the solving of the problem of the end and the means, of violence and non-violence in the context of the fight for independence, and each thinker solved it in his own way. Swami Vivekananda too gave it his own distinctive interpretation.

The bourgeois authors in their critical works on this question affirm, as a rule, that Vivekananda absolutized the means, thereby anticipating M. K. Gandhi. Thus, in particular, Oliver Lacombe, professor of philosophy of Sorbonne University, in his article *Swami Vivekananda on Practical Vedanta* compared a number of sayings of M. K. Gandhi and Vivekananda on the question of correlation of ends and means, and came to the conclusion that the doctrine of Swami Vivekananda about the importance of the means definitely prepared the soil for the subsequent judgements of M. K. Gandhi on the purity of the means.

Indeed, Vivekananda believed that attention to means, as well as to the ends, determined the success of the solution of vital problems. 'One of the greatest lessons which I learnt from my life is that one should pay equally great attention

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to the means as to the objectives...,' wrote Vivekananda, 'it appears to me that all the secret of success is there....But whenever failure comes, if we analyse it critically, in ninety-nine per cent of cases we shall find that it was because we did not pay attention to the means.'<sup>50</sup> Vivekananda places special accent on the importance of the means. 'If we take care of the cause,' he contended, 'the effect will take care of itself. The realization of the ideal is the effect. The means are the cause; attention to the means, therefore, is the great secret of life.'<sup>51</sup> Oliver Lacomb, striving to present Vivekananda as the precursor of the views of M. K. Gandhi with his decisive message of non-violence, restricts himself only to the above quoted statements of the thinker, considering these adequate for corroborating his point of view. Such an approach of Lacomb to the treatment of Vivekananda's views on correlation of the ends and the means was dictated by his ideological sympathies—he being an adherent of neotomism. Lacomb asserts that one of the modern pillars of this trend, Jean Mariten develops precisely the ideas which were expressed in their times by Vivekananda and then Mahatma Gandhi. Lacomb feels that Vivekananda first turned to this problem which now is 'one of the serious concerns of modern consciousness'.

## NON-RESISTANCE TO EVIL

Non-resistance to evil, as a virtue, is in Swami Vivekananda the highest but distant abstract ideal, which in perspective all people must strive for. In the day to day life, a man's duty, the thinker opines, lies just in resistance to evil. Vivekananda wrote: 'The *Karma-Yogi* is the man who understands that the highest ideal is non-resistance, and who also knows that this non-resistance is the highest manifestation of power in actual possession, and also what is called the resisting of evil is but a step on the way towards the manifestation of this highest power, namely, non-resistance. Before reaching this highest ideal, man's duty is to resist evil; let him work, let him fight, let him strike straight from the shoulder. Then

only, when he has gained the power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue.'<sup>52</sup> But the whole question is of how Vivekananda conceived this resistance to evil. Is it achieved with the aid only of violence, or only of non-violence, or of either of the two depending upon the circumstances?

There are statements where Vivekananda, the thinker, has admitted the use of means, bordering on violence. He is repulsed from the position of the relativity of good and evil, their conflicting identity in every concrete case, assuming that only some means should not once and for all be regarded as 'good', and others as 'sinful'. Resting upon the position of the *Bhagavadgita*, Vivekananda wrote: 'Arjuna<sup>53</sup> killed Bhishma<sup>54</sup> and Drona<sup>55</sup>; if this had not been done, Duryodhana could not have been conquered, the force of evil would have triumphed over the force of good, and thus a great calamity would have fallen on the country. The government of the country would have been usurped by a body of proud unrighteous kings, to the great misfortune of the people. Similarly, Sri Krishna killed Kamsa, Jarasandha, and others who were tyrants, but not a single one of his deeds was done for himself. Everyone of them was for the good of others. . . . Those who work without any consciousness of their lower ego are not affected with evil, for they work for the good of the world. . . . This secret of *Karma-Yoga* is taught by Lord Sri Krishna in the *Gita*.'<sup>56</sup> In the present case one cannot but draw some parallels with the thoughts of B. G. Tilak, particularly the statements made by him in his speech at celebrations devoted to Shivaji.

Thus, Vivekananda did not absolutize either violence or non-violence. Blind pursuit of non-violence, from his point of view, can lead to moral losses, to losses not only for the individual but also for the whole nation. 'The teaching "resist not evil"',—wrote Vivekananda,—'seems to us to be the highest ideal; yet to teach this doctrine only would be equivalent to condemning a vast portion of mankind. Not only so, it would be making men feel that they were always doing wrong, and

cause in them scruples of conscience in all their actions; it would weaken them, and that constant self-disapproval would breed more vice than any other weakness would. To the man who has begun to hate himself, the gate to degeneration has already opened; and the same is true of a nation.’<sup>57</sup>

Many statements of Vivekananda testify that he shows preference for the principle of non-violence. Thus, he wrote: ‘We ought not to hate any one. This world will always continue to be a mixture of good and evil. Our duty is to sympathize with the weak and to love even the wrongdoer. The world is a grand moral gymnasium wherein we have all to take exercise so as to become stronger and stronger spiritually.’<sup>58</sup> In all probability Vivekananda often has in view the spiritual fight against evil, the spiritual strength, when he speaks of resistance to evil. Here the spiritual force appears as a result of man’s realization of *Atman*, urge towards greedlessness and identity with divine essence. ‘One man does not resist because he is weak, lazy, and cannot, not because he will not,’—wrote Vivekananda,—‘the other man knows that he can strike an irresistible blow if he likes; yet he not only does not strike, but blesses his enemies. The one who from weakness resists not commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering resistance.... So we must always be careful about what we really mean when we speak of this non-resistance and ideal love. We must first take care to understand whether we have the power of resistance or not. Then, having the power, if we renounce it and do not resist, we are doing a grand act of love.’<sup>59</sup>

In a word, in instances where Vivekananda allows the use of force as a possible means of resisting evil, the problem at once turns to the plane of strictly limited circumstances, since non-violence does invariably remain the ideal. This latter [viz., non-violence] a man must pursue, not only by overcoming all vital conflicts and rising from above the morality of the empirical world to perfect morality and by strictly discerning between the ‘good’ and ‘sinful’ means, but also in day to day

practical life, resisting evil by non-violence. Admitting in principle the possibility of resisting evil by violence, Vivekananda also at the same time adhered to the positions of reformation and strove to secure social compromise.

#### SERMON OF ACTIVE WORK

But he has also elements of dialectical approach to the problem, when the end and the means act as correlating and mutually linked categories. Vivekananda assumed that what was now the end, could at another moment become the means. Thus, calling for spiritual and moral perfecting of man as the definite aim, the thinker at the same time showed that the very activity of the people acts as the means for attaining the higher aim—the perfecting of the world. ‘The world’,—wrote Vivekananda, ‘can be good and pure, only if our lives are good and pure. It [the world] is an effect, and we are the means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves. Let us make ourselves perfect.’<sup>60</sup>

Howsoever clever the confessional-metaphysical themes of Vivekananda’s judgements might be, his sermon of resisting evil was first and foremost a call for effective actions for the good of the country. The social needs, the needs of *Swaraj* sought expression. Turning to his countrymen, Vivekananda taught that the sermon of active work, presented as a duty for the broadest masses, was taken up already in the *Bhagavadgita*. The passiveness in practical life, the message of pardon and love for one’s neighbour had, in the thinker’s view, been affirmed by the Christian religion. But, in practice, the teaching of the *Gita*, Vivekananda observes, is followed precisely by the Europeans while the Indians instead stick to an inert mode of life.<sup>61</sup> Preaching vital activity amongst his countrymen and advocating social and national emancipation of the masses, Vivekananda approached the solving of these problems from the standpoint of a democrat and a romantic. The extreme forms of appearance of political and social activity in developed capitalist countries of the West, and the antagonistic class contradictions, did not



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seem to him relevant to the conditions of India, where, in his view, a stable balance between activity and contemplation by resistance to evil by violence and non-violence had already been found in the ancient times, though later lost. In the quests of the lost harmony between activity and contemplation, Vivekananda builds up an utopia in which materialize on the one hand his progressive-democratic aspirations and dreams of emancipation of masses, and appears on the other a wrong understanding, typical of bourgeois theoreticians, of the class character of society and of the class struggle proceeding from it, and its radical non-acceptance.

### CRITICISM OF UTILITARIANISM IN ETHICS AND OF BOURGEOIS MORALS

The principles of utilitarianism and hedonism<sup>62</sup> woven firmly into the system of bourgeois morality rooted in the West, and partly influencing the outlook of Vivekananda's countrymen, were sharply criticized by him. Vivekananda was quite familiar with the principles of utilitarian ethics and, in particular, with the ideas of J. S. Mill, whose works had attracted him as early as his college days. Later, becoming the famous religious preceptor, Vivekananda arrived at the deep conviction that 'enlightened egoism' could not be considered the basis of morality.<sup>63</sup> From Vivekananda's point of view, the utilitarian and hedonistic principles are immanently inherent in modern Western morality, for these are conditioned by the pursuit of pleasure as the main aim of life which the peoples of the West are guided by. It is to be noted that Vivekananda frequently employs moral concepts while appraising any nation. Thus, he believed that every nation had its own character. And in this context his description of the so-called 'English character' is not without interest. 'In the English character, the "give and take" policy, the business principle of the trader, is principally inherent.'—wrote Vivekananda,—'The Englishman humbly submits to the king and to the privileges of the nobility...but if the king wants

money, the Englishman says: All right, but first let me understand why it is needed, what good it will bring; next, I must have my say in the matter of how it is to be spent, and then I shall part with it.'<sup>64</sup> The determining feature of 'Indian character', according to Vivekananda, is, however, spirituality. 'The Hindu says,' he wrote, 'that political and social independence are well and good, but the real thing is spiritual independence—*mukti*. This is our national purpose.'<sup>65</sup>

Thus, asserting that every nation has a national character and its own national purpose, and that 'the manners and customs of a nation must be judged from the standpoint of that purpose',<sup>66</sup> Vivekananda draws the following conclusion: 'The Westerners should be seen through their eyes; to see them through our eyes, and for them to see us with theirs—both of these are mistakes. The purpose of our life is quite the opposite of theirs. . . . Our goal of life is *moksha*. . . The purpose of life in the West is *bhoga*, enjoyment.'<sup>67</sup>

Considering that the moral principles of the West are the opposite of, and incompatible with, the religious-moral requirements set for the man in India, Vivekananda not only stresses the distinctiveness of the latter but also strives to show their uniqueness. Although Vivekananda himself emphasizes the fact that in judging any manner of life one should proceed by taking into account the 'moral character' of the nation itself, keeping in mind its 'own moral purpose', his criticism nevertheless of utilitarian and hedonistic principles of the West is, on the whole, from Vedantic positions which manifest his ideas of national uniqueness, peculiar of him as a nationalist.

The Westerners, in Vivekananda's view, give priority to enjoyments and pleasures, which also serve them as very vital stimuli. This inevitably leads to development and predominance of egoistic tendencies, and to the fact that egoism and individualism become the practice of the Western mode of life. 'The vain ideas of individualism',—Vivekananda wrote,— 'to which man clings when he is trying to find . . . pleasure through the senses, have to be given up—say the laws of

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ethics.' 'You must,'—the thinker stresses,—'put *yourself* last, and others before you. The senses say, "myself first," ethics says, "I must hold myself last"'.<sup>68</sup>

Despite the traditional reference that all troubles have their source in the human body, the thinker in these judgements rightly criticizes utilitarianists for their lack of concern for the lofty spiritual aspirations of man. Observing at the time of his foreign travels an unrestrained egoistic pursuit of profit, open individualism, receiving legal sanction in bourgeois society, Vivekananda rightly points to the spiritual poverty of the peoples concentrating all their attention on material needs and becoming, in the ultimate count, slaves of their desires. These desires inevitably devour the man; there is no end to them; a man can never fully satisfy his desires. 'The utilitarians say, "Don't talk of God and hereafter; we don't know anything of these things,"—the thinker wrote. 'As long as you are a slave of nature,' Vivekananda objects, 'how can you be free ?' 'The more you struggle, the more enveloped you become', he adds.<sup>69</sup>

## UTILITARIAN CRITERIA

Vivekananda does not adopt the utilitarian criteria of usefulness, which are the yardsticks for measuring all manifestations of vital activity of man in the world surrounding him. 'In these days', the philosopher observes, 'we have to measure everything by utility—by how many pounds, shillings, and pence it represents.'<sup>70</sup> It is to be noted that here Vivekananda rises in his judgements to the point of statement of definite dependence of utilitarian principles of morality on capitalist reality. Vivekananda wrote: '...the basis of utility is too narrow. All the current social forms and methods are derived from society as it exists, but what right has the utilitarian to assume that society is eternal ?... At best, therefore, utilitarian theories can only work under present social conditions. Beyond that they have no value.'<sup>71</sup>

The ethical views of Vivekananda objectively contain the admission that in the conditions of the bourgeois reality in the

form in which he observed it in the West, love of man, equality and other sublime requirements cannot, speaking on principle, be achieved. The real principle of these requirements can only be high 'spirituality' which he identifies with Indian spirituality. The latter played a great role in his nationalistic utopia, in the building up of a factually bourgeois society, shorn, however, in his notions, of those contradictions which it actually had.

The base of this 'spirituality' for Vivekananda was in the religious-moral principles of Vedanta, whose morality he had considered eternal and unchangeable, adaptable for all peoples, at all times, in any society'. 'A morality, an ethical code, derived from religion and spirituality', wrote Vivekananda, 'has the whole of infinite man (in view here is eternal and endless divine essence, *Atman*, immanently inherent in each person.—author) for its scope... and as it applies to the individual and his eternal relations, it must necessarily apply to the whole of society, in whatever condition it may be at any given time.'<sup>72</sup>

The criticism of utilitarian principles which, as shown above, Vivekananda on the whole made from Vedantic positions, was dictated, however, not so much by the thinker's desire to demonstrate the superiority of the religious-moral principles of Vedanta, as by a patriot's concern for the destiny of his homeland, of his countrymen amongst whom the utilitarian moods had partly made their way. The moral indignation which Vivekananda expressed with regard to contemporary bourgeois norms of morality was extremely significant. His criticism of capitalism, as also the critical speeches of many other radical nationalists of the late nineteenth century, 'played a progressive role, for it helped in the growth of national liberation aspirations, and was the symptom of growing democratic upsurge in India and expressed it in its own way'.

It should be noted that despite his criticism of utilitarian morality, Vivekananda's attitude to it was not the same.<sup>73</sup> He accepted some positive aspects of utilitarianistically oriented

man at a lower stage of moral development. 'I do not deny', he wrote, 'that men, on simply utilitarian grounds, can be very good and moral. There have been many great men in this world perfectly sound, moral, and good, simply on utilitarian grounds. But the world-movers, men... whose spirit works in hundreds and in thousands, whose life ignites others with a spiritual fire—such men, we always find, have that spiritual background.'<sup>74</sup> Thus, emphasizing the obvious superiority of moral-religious principles of Vedanta over the moral principles of the West, Vivekananda nonetheless does not rule out the positive significance of some of these principles. What sort of traits and characteristics of moral visage of the man in the West does the thinker expound ? First of all, Vivekananda was attracted by the sober and practical attitude of the West to vital problems and situations, by the ability to set concrete tasks and fulfil them. In other words, the dynamism of the Western mode of life taken outside the extremes of utilitarianism and hedonism represented to Vivekananda the point at which it was necessary to turn his attention to his countrymen. And, in this context, the interpretation of Aesop's Fable given by Vivekananda in his lecture in 1896 is extremely significant. 'You all remember',—he said,—'how in *Aesop's Fables* a fine stag is looking at his form reflected in a lake and is saying to his young one, "How powerful I am, look at my splendid head, look at my limbs, how strong and muscular they are; and how swiftly I can run." In the meantime he hears the barking of dogs in the distance, and immediately takes to his heels, and after he has run several miles, he comes back panting. The young one says, "You just told me how strong you were, how was it that when the dogs barked, you ran away ?" "Yes, my son; but when the dogs bark all my confidence vanishes." Such is the case with us,'—concludes Vivekananda,—'we think highly of humanity, we feel ourselves strong and valiant, we make grand resolves; but when the "dogs" of trial and temptation bark, we are like the stag in the fable.'<sup>75</sup>

This expresses with all clarity Vivekananda's acceptance of the significance of the practical aspect of moral precepts, the inadequacy of some mere prophesies and moral precepts, the need of practical realization in life of those moral ideals which have been affirmed by ethics (of course, by Vedantist ethics, as the highest system of ethics in his view).

#### VEDANTIC CATEGORIES AND PRINCIPLES

The ethical views of Vivekananda, like that social soil on which these developed, are contradictory. The ideas of humanism, social and national liberation, were expressed in his outlook through Vedantist categories and principles. Criticism of the privileges of higher castes, the struggle for emancipation of personality, in Vivekananda's ethical views, found expression in the affirmation of relativity of caste boundaries and caste obligations, in the protest against the undermining of human dignity in conditions of feudal and colonial dependence—In the affirmation of the inherent value of human personality. Assigning to the first and foremost place such qualities of personality as activity (selfless activity of the *karma-yogi*, the active spirit of *rajas*) and self-denial, reflected the needs of the national liberation movement, and at the same time the process of disintegration of the feudal and the growth of the national-bourgeois ideology.<sup>76</sup>

Vivekananda's ethical views can be reduced to the following specific positions:

Characteristic for the ethical views of Vivekananda was the affirmation of the relativity of caste boundaries, as also of caste obligations—*jati-dharma*. Vivekananda's speeches against rigid caste boundaries and strictly regulated caste obligations reflected objectively the needs of social development at that stage of it when the affirmation of bourgeois relations was still 'the only possible method of opening before the individual the new field of more free development'. Thus, objectively helping in the affirmation of the principle of early bourgeois individualism,<sup>77</sup> which consisted in the protest against strictly

regulated moral norms and precepts, Vivekananda proclaimed the ideas of free development of personality; at the same time he criticized bourgeois individualism in that form of it in which it came before him in the developed capitalist society.

Inherent in Vivekananda's ethical views was humanist sympathies expressed in non-traditional interpretation of *karma-yoga* and putting forward of its principles as the defining ones in mutual relations between peoples in the contemporary period. The stress on *karma-yoga* essentially signified the advancing to the forefront of 'worldly' moral problems and quests of means for their solution.

A significant role in the ethical views of Vivekananda was played by the category of force which, acting as a typical alloy of the spiritual and the physical, was, on the whole, not characteristic of traditional Vedantist ethics. Vivekananda paid great attention to physical strength proper. Together with this, a study of his ethical views shows that the category of strength and weakness was on the whole studied by him from religious-idealistic positions. At the same time, the functional purpose of the given categories in Vivekananda's ethics did not always correspond to speculative ideals of Vedanta and was objectively directed to affirmation of possibility and need for the Indian people to free themselves from colonial oppression with their own strength.

Characteristic of Vivekananda's ethical views is the protest against feudal morality with its aversion to physical labour. Vivekananda regarded labour as a positive prerequisite for man fighting for democratic awakening of the working masses of India.

The general democratic protest against feudal and colonial forms of oppression, and traditional social inequality, were, in Vivekananda's outlook, coupled with a definite criticism of bourgeois structure and particularly of the morality of bourgeois ready money. But this criticism (later continued and developed by B. G. Tilak and A. Ghosh) was in Vivekananda still of a purely limited moralistic nature. Because of a whole

lot of both objective as well as subjective reasons, the thinker was still not able to counter the bourgeois moral structure by anything but moralistic utopia,<sup>78</sup> somewhat similar to ideological formulations of the Russian *narodniks*<sup>79</sup> and particularly of Leo Tolstoy.

Like Russian *narodniks*, considering, as per V. I. Lenin's definition, bourgeois morality as some sort of a chance disease 'and not the direct product of bourgeois structures, developing from commodity economy', Vivekananda thought it possible to control the social-moral vices of the contemporary Indian society with the help of 'spirituality', whose base, according to his views, was in the moral-religious principles of Vedanta. The moral progress, therefore, in Vivekananda's notion, as also for the Russian *narodniks*, was wholly dependent on the efforts of theoretician-moralists. Thus, believing that India must bring to the West the saving 'spirituality', Vivekananda judged the dominance of moral-religious principles of Vedanta as the highest stage of moral progress.

#### AN IMPORTANT PAGE IN INDIAN ETHICAL THOUGHT

The social and moral-religious views of Vivekananda had a great influence on the most diverse strata of Indian society. One would need a special, independent monograph to discuss what traces Vivekananda left behind in the spiritual life of the country, and what interpretations his teaching has been and is being subjected to. With the name of Vivekananda is associated a very important page in the history of Indian ethical thought. Reflecting the spirit of those tasks and transformations which the country was facing in the social-political conditions of that time, the thinker provided an impetus of its own kind to a fresh understanding of many problems, including also the ethical, having created a relatively whole ethical teaching—the ethics of neo-Vedantism. The eminent political leaders and thinkers of the Indian national liberation movement—M. K. Gandhi, J. Nehru, R. Tagore, B. G. Tilak, A. Ghosh—constantly turned to the creative heritage of Vivekananda.



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Of course, each of them, having his own ethical vision, had his own approach to his views.

The neo-Vedantist ethics of Vivekananda helped in many ways the formation of ethical views of radical democrats, B. G. Tilak and A. Ghosh. Their ethical notions were not a repetition or direct continuance of the ethics of neo-Vedantism, but were independent ethical formulations. Further correlation of ethics with the needs of social-political development of India can be observed on the example of the ethical views of Tilak and Ghosh. Together with this, the process of social changes, reflected in ethical views of all three thinkers, assumed in Tilak and Ghosh a brilliantly expressed anti-colonial trend, expressed in the form of adaptation of ethics to the needs of anti-colonial struggle.

## NOTES

1. Vivekananda was a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886). The main stages of the life and work of the thinker, and also the influence of reformist ideas of Ramakrishna on the Indian democrat's outlook, are surveyed in V. S. Kostyuchenko's monograph *Vivekananda* (in Russian; see pp. 42-74).
2. But, Vivekananda considered intelligence the greatest force of social development.
3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, 1922-1951. (Hereafter: CWV). See vol. 2, p. 255.
4. In his monograph *Struktury nraustvennogo soznaniya* [Structures of Moral Consciousness], A. I. Titarenko undertook the attempt to examine the question of typology of structures of moral consciousness, characteristic for various social-economic formations. He arrives at the following principal conclusion: 'The moral consciousness of an individual, functioning according to the "orientation from within" method, is typical for a personality of the period of free competition'. Here the author also shows the genesis of this 'orientation from within' or introvertness of moral consciousness, pointing out that the premises of its appearance 'have a long history', manifesting also at the level of feudal-moral consciousness. But the latter is very far in this respect from consciousness reflecting the outer associations of the individual, adapted to the situations relative to 'autonomous moral choice.... The introvertness of moral consciousness, on forming, helped in the change of very religiosity of man... No doubt,'—continues A. I. Titarenko,—'that religion has to adapt itself to the new peculiarity of func-

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tioning of moral consciousness. And not only to adapt but also to use it in its interests.'

5. CWV, vol. 1, p. 384.
6. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 388.
7. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 108.
8. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 107.
9. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 83.
10. In his monograph *Vivekananda* [in Russian], V. S. Kostyuchenko reveals the new things which the thinker introduced into the traditional concept of *mokhsa*. In particular, he observes: '...sharing the advaita teaching of possibility of "salvation" during life (*jivanmukti*), and not after death, he [Vivekananda.—author] believes that the "liberation" would be attained in the society (and not outside it)—and hence the characterization of *mokhsa* as collective, and not only universal."
11. CWV, vol. 1, pp. 83-4.
12. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 4.
13. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 176.
14. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 78-9.
15. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 233.
16. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 78.
17. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 107.
18. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 2.
19. For an analysis of Vivekananda's ideas about the society of *jivanmuktas* see V. S. Kostyuchenko's monograph *Vivekananda* [in Russian; pp. 136-40].
20. CWV, vol. 6, p. 2.
21. In his study of traditional stages of life, Vivekananda limits himself only to two, observing that the 'four stages of life in India have in later times been reduced to two—that of the householder and of the sannyasi' (CWV, vol. 1, p. 40).
22. CWV, vol. 2, pp. 34-9.
23. Sister Nivedita (Margaret Nobel)—the disciple and follower of Swami Vivekananda.
24. Govind Chandra Dey—the author of the article *Vivekananda's Ethics of Self-Renunciation and Service*, shows that the thinker frequently welcomed also formal sannyasa.
25. CWV, vol. 5, p. 187.
26. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 296.
27. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 241.
28. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 126.
29. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 358.
30. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 359.
31. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 359.
32. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 354-5.
33. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 293.
34. Characterizing the process of growth of bourgeois moral, the Soviet scholars observe: '...the static world of simple social structures...world, in which

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the relations between the peoples were confined to the limits of restricted groups, completely absorbing the people, greatly retarding the process of their development, is a thing of the past. Compared with this world, the bourgeois individualism in those conditions was progressive, in so far as it opened to an individual possibilities for more free development.'

35. CWV, vol. 5, p. 304.
36. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 319.
37. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 297.
38. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 55.
39. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 283.
40. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 353.
41. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 74.
42. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 109.
43. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 110.
44. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 54.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 25.
47. *Ibid.*, vol. 2.
48. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 4.
49. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 83.
50. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 1.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 37.
53. Arjuna—the famous hero of the Indian epic, *Mahabharata*.
54. Bhishma—son of king Santanu and Ganga, famous for his extraordinary nobility, courage and righteousness.
55. Drona—son of Bharadvaja, expert in art of war, the teacher of the Kauravas and Pandavas.
56. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 176.
57. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 35-6.
58. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 78.
59. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 36-7.
60. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 9.
61. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 356.
62. The criticism of utilitarianism and hedonism found its continuance in B. G. Tilak, A. Ghosh, and later in M. K. Gandhi and other social and political leaders.
63. CWV, vol. 2, p. 63.
64. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 361.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 416.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 62.
69. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 37-8.
70. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 83.
71. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 64.

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72. *Ibid.*
73. The reference here is not only to one philosophical conception or the other, containing utilitarian principles, but also to concrete bourgeois practice, interpreted by employing categorial apparatus of these conceptions.
74. CWV, vol. 2, pp. 66-7.
75. *Ibid.*, vol. 2.
76. As observed by A. I. Titarenko, 'the turn in attention to man, his ideals and inner world was the result of the crisis of feudalism, was born of the new environment, conditioned by the animated movement of capital. The problem of personality destroying the indirect fetters of feudal-position and patriarchal-genetic relations, its initiatives, self-activity, work and destinies will lie in the centre of spiritual life, expressed in its own way in morals, philosophy, art, religion.'
77. The principle of bourgeois individualism in its early form is determined 'as belief in man and defence of his rights to freedom of thought and freedom of moral choice—this early bourgeois individualism was also void of class self-interest and joined the struggle against darkness, inertness, ignorance of the medieval period and the most heterogeneous social forces.'
78. In his article *Criticism of Bourgeois Society in India in the Late 19th Century*, E. N. Komarov compares the social views of Vivekananda and other radical Indian nationalists of the late 19th century with the views of Russian *narodniks*. Comparing these, he stresses that if the corner stone of the teaching of Russian *narodniks* was the idealization of village community, whose help they counted on for 'warning' capitalism as an economic system, Vivekananda, trying to avoid mainly the contradictions of capitalism, saw the Indian distinctiveness in the dominance of 'medieval religious consciousness', Indian 'spirituality'.
79. The Russian populists.

# VEDANTA AND THE PROBLEM OF CORRELATION OF INDIAN AND EUROPEAN CULTURES

V. S. KOSTYUCHENKO

**I**N the evolution of neo-Vedantism some sort of dialogue—hidden or obvious, reconciliatory or rigidly critical, concrete or global—has always been there with the European social and philosophical thought. The Vedantist revival in the nineteenth century, and the ‘politicalization’ of Vedanta in the early decades of the twentieth and particularly, the modernization of its spiritual arsenal then being carried out have also not been without such a dialogue. In the ultimate end, this leads (in the same early decades of the twentieth century) to the realization of the problem of correlation of Indian and European cultures as one of the central in neo-Vedantism.

Here the reference already is not simply to the correlation of some sort of modern tendencies in the European and Indian spiritual life, but to the appearance of typological characteristics of Indian culture compared with the European. In other words, there takes place a transition from synchronic to diachronic and from the direct to philosophical reflexive method of studying the said problem. Indian culture has frequently been regarded by the neo-Vedantist thinkers as an ‘omnipotent representative’ of its own kind of the culture of the East in general, so that the whole problem appears as the question of of, ‘East-West’ cultural-typographical opposition.

In so far as in neo-Vedantism culture is treated usually in the form of a ‘central nucleus’ (or ‘heart’) of its own kind of the respective civilization, the issue of culture turns out to be closely related also to that of social-historical process on the whole. Here the most prominent representatives of neo-Vedantism act as the principal opponents of ‘cultivating’ and ‘identifying’ the civilizations of the East and the West in the

spirit both of the 'wasted', vulgarized, colonial precepts (Kipling), as well as, of the contemporary philosophical-historical conceptions (Spengler).<sup>3</sup>

Characteristic for them are first the stress on overall 'general' arrangement of world history (the 'empires' replacing each other, of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras in Vivekananda; the periods of symbolism, typicism, conventionalism, individualism, subjectivism in Aurobindo etc.); secondly, the acceptance of mutual action of cultures (and civilizations) within the given arrangement; thirdly, the advantageous correlation, the maximum extent of 'self-expression' of specific culture at various stages of historical development (thus, the 'empire of Vaishyas' or the 'period of individualism' is regarded most typical in this sense for the West); lastly, viz. fourthly, ascribing to the culture of the East (India) a special role in the remote past of mankind and its future (saving from 'self-murderous' tendencies of European culture).

#### SPIRITUALITY OF CULTURE

What, from the viewpoint of neo-Vedantists, are these special, saving peculiarities of Indian culture? What is the specific nature of this culture? The replies of the neo-Vedantist thinkers to these questions agree on one point, namely, in emphasizing the *spirituality* of this culture and its contrast to the 'earthly'—utilitarian, pragmatist, 'materialist' (in the broad sense of this word, including not only scientific but also its primarily vulgar-commonplace treatments<sup>3</sup>) structures of the cultures of the West. This does not, however, also preclude the presence of a number of specific variants in the said replies. All these variants, essentially, were projected already on the boundary of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries in Vivekananda's lectures and speeches.<sup>4</sup> Here we also find the thesis about the special role of religion in the culture of India, and the attempt to determine the specific nature of Hinduism, and on a broader level, of other 'components' of Indian culture, particularly philosophy, and lastly, the urge to find out the

characteristics of psychological structures, typical of the creators and preservers of Indian cultural heritage.<sup>5</sup>

We find the respective variants worked out in detail in the early decades of the twentieth century in the works of Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.<sup>6</sup>

The first such variant is expressed most distinctly by Aurobindo Ghosh in his *Foundations of Indian Culture* (1918-1921). In the series of essays published in the *Arya*, under such a title, Ghosh enters into polemics with the British journalist U. Archer who popularized the Europe-centrist cultural structures of his countryman A. Hay, the author of works on Indian philosophy. The *strong* side of this polemics of Ghosh is the brilliant refutation of the libels, which had by that time become stereotyped, on Indian culture that it was preaching quietism, pessimism, moral indifference, nonchalance to attainment and assimilation or peace etc.<sup>7</sup> Ghosh convincingly shows both the real political state of affairs underneath such 'libels' (namely, apology of colonialism<sup>8</sup>), as well as, their baselessness revealed already within the Vedantist tradition (we shall recall *Bhagavadgita*!), not even to speak of ancient Indian cultural heritage with its truly unlimited diversity. Ghosh paints in bright colour the undoubted achievements of ancient Indians in all fields of social activity—political, economic, scientific, aesthetic, philosophical. In spite of Archer, ancient India (in contrast to the medieval) was by no means a 'stagnant marsh' but a model of multisided and highly developed civilization.<sup>9</sup>

But, accepting the multisidedness of Indian civilization and culture, Ghosh particularly stresses one aspect of it, considering it important and formative. According to Ghosh, civilizations (as also people) consist of 'body', 'reason' and 'spirit'.<sup>10</sup> In some of these (modern European) it is the 'body' that dominates, in others (Greek)—'reason' and lastly in still others (Indian)—'spirit'. Dividing and many times sub-dividing 'reason' (ethical, aesthetic, scientific etc.), Ghosh considers that all its principal manifestations in India were subjected to 'spirit' and its expressor—*religion*. It is from this that he builds

up a typical three-storeyed 'pyramid' of Indian culture: at the top is religion with its ally, philosophy, below are the other forms of cultural activity (art, literature, science), still below are the 'practical' manifestations of religious ideals in economic and political life.<sup>11</sup> Explaining this scheme, Ghosh stresses that, from his point of view, in ancient India, unlike in Europe, there was no conflict between 'spirit' and 'reason', and particularly between religion and philosophy, as a result of which all other forms of culture dutifully followed 'philosophy, made dynamic because of religion, and religion, made enlightened because of philosophy...'.<sup>12</sup> Ghosh pins his hopes on restoration of this past 'harmony' between religion and philosophy, while talking of the future of Indian and European ('fertilized' by India) culture.

#### KAUTILYA'S *ARTHASHASTRA*

But this past 'harmony' is essentially a *myth*. We find its convincing refutation in the works of modern Marxist scholars of history of Indian philosophy.<sup>13</sup> It is characteristic that in such a prominently known monument of ancient Indian social thought as Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, Samkhya, Yoga, and Lokayata are mentioned as the three main trends in philosophy.<sup>14</sup> But the last of these was consistently a materialistic and atheistic system; and from amongst the three main variants, the first two were atheistic and one was a naturalist-pantheistic teaching. The materialistic and atheistic ideas can be traced also in the history of other philosophical schools—Vaishehika, Purva-Mimamsa, Jainism. And in this sense Lokayata was in no way an accidental phenomenon, a 'by-product' in the history of Indian philosophy, but a culmination of unorthodox tendencies, partly hidden behind the outer orthodox facades. One can be convinced of it on following the polemicist trend of the *Brahma-sutra*.<sup>15</sup>

If religion did, however, exercise considerable influence on various forms of culture both of ancient and particularly mediaeval India, this was hardly something unique. According



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to the completely well-established view of S. Radhakrishnan, up to 1500 A.D., there was a similarity between India and Europe (and correspondingly, between East and West), as regards the place and role of religion; and the differences in this regard started appearing mainly from the time of Renaissance.<sup>16</sup> It is characteristic that Radhakrishnan does not on the whole consider possible the rigid contrast of the West to the East (even in the modern days), asserting (in the spirit of the principle 'everything is in everything', so popular in Indian thought) that even in our days one can speak only of *West-Eastern* and *East-Western* types of cultural lines (besides, not static but dynamic, 'mutually aspiring' and 'mutually transitory').<sup>17</sup> Despite all this, Radhakrishnan does not at all deny the presence of specific features of Indian religion which left their mark on Indian culture on the whole. The beginning of a quest for these specific features was made by Vivekananda. According to him, the main religions of the world (Islam, Christianity, Hinduism) are, in their totality, typologically correlated with various forms of Vedanta (*dvaita*, *vishishtadvaita*, *advaita*), arranged hierarchically. Thus, Hinduism is found to (a) be related to the highest form of Vedanta and thus placed at the highest stage of 'spiritual hierarchy'; (b) include, in 'skimmed' form, the lower stages of this hierarchy (and thereby act as a maximally broad spiritual formation); (c) be closest of all to the most profound and authentic sources of all religions (the latter are the 'echoes' of their own kind and imperfect translations of Eastern 'insight').

### ACCEPTANCE OF VIVEKANANDA

Many thoughts of Vivekananda were accepted by the eminent Vedantists of the first half of the twentieth century. Thus, we find in Aurobindo the idea of Eastern (and, in the ultimate count, of the Indian) sources of main religions,<sup>18</sup> and in Radhakrishnan the idea of special importance of *advaita* for the creation of a world 'fraternity' of religions etc.

Some substantial correctives were also, though, made in

Vivekananda's conception. It is characteristic that Radhakrishnan stresses the mutual character of cultural (including also religious) influence of the East and West,<sup>19</sup> thereby digressing from the pronounced *Asia-centrism* of his predecessors (not only Vivekananda but also Aurobindo). Still more significant is Radhakrishnan's rejection of the idea of hierarchical arrangement of religions (according to the forms of Vedanta). From his point of view, the realization of the inexpressibility of the absolute (attained not only by Sankara but also by Plotinus)<sup>20</sup> leads to equality of its own kind of all attempts to 'express the inexpressible', and, this means, of all religions none of which can claim an unconditional advantage over others.<sup>21</sup> Like Nikolai Kuzansky and the Florentine followers of Plato, Radhakrishnan considers various religions, mere endless rays converging into one 'solar type' point, rather than steps of a spiritual pyramid.

Still, in his words, 'all the religions of the world, like all the women of the world, cannot be compared by us with our own'.<sup>22</sup> And, speaking of specific merits of Hinduism, he, in many ways, comes close to Vivekananda and Aurobindo. The neo-Vedantist thinkers are practically unanimous in stressing such features of Hinduist religion as (a) its steadiness (vitality), (b) unique variety of its cultic forms and theological concepts, (c) its inherent tolerance, and, lastly, (d) the great significance of mystic experience in it.<sup>23</sup>

The first two signs are fixed fairly correctly, though we do not find in the neo-Vedantists any elucidations of their real causes. Thus, the historical steadiness of Hinduism is inseparably linked with the stability of social structure of Indian society in the course of hundreds of years (system of castes, system of village communities). But in Aurobindo, for instance, everything turns upside down, and the stability of social structure of India in the past appears in the form of outcome of the 'embodiment' of stable religious ideals (*sanatana dharma*).

With regard to the third (according to neo-Vedantists) sign of Hinduism, one may have serious reservations. Of course,

even this is given not without proper justification.<sup>24</sup> One has only to compare the *supra*-polytheistic line of Vedanta with *anti*-polytheistic lines in theology and religious-philosophical thought, for instance, of Islam. The Hinduist 'theology' is characterized both by extreme amorphousness (admitting the co-existence of the most diverse versions of myths, legends, beliefs) as well as the presence of a powerful tradition of 'cultivation', it would seem, of incompatible concepts with the help of the system of 'levels', and mutual penetration of various beliefs (forming, as it were, parts of a 'spiritual universum', reflecting in their own way the complex structure of the whole). But, first, this tolerance, judging from everything, did *not* spread to obvious atheism (it was not just a matter of chance that the *sutras* of Lokayata, unlike all others, were 'lost' and perhaps also simply destroyed). Secondly, the tolerance in regard to other beliefs was only relative (it is enough to mention here the struggle of Hinduism against Buddhism and Jainism in the Middle Ages, already well-known to us from the history of *advaita*, the persecutions of Vishnuites by the followers of Shaivism and vice versa, which is seen, for instance from the biography of Ramanuja, etc.). Finally, viz. thirdly, the luke-warm attitude and relative tolerance of the orthodox were successfully compensated by the rigid fixedness and intolerance of orthopraxy.

As regards the fourth sign, it should be noted that the dependence on mystic experience has, of course, been characteristic of all religions; but in India, as nowhere else, we think, this experience has been varied and 'technically developed' (one has only to recall various types of yoga with their vast arsenal of means, methods, ways of attaining *samadhi* etc.).

#### HINDUISM AND NEO-VEDANTISM

Without restricting themselves to eliciting the specific nature of Hinduism, the neo-Vedantists strive to show the specific characteristics also of other 'elements' of Indian culture, primarily philosophy. The reference here is often to

*imaginary* (already mentioned above) 'characteristics', namely the dominance of spiritualism in all philosophical systems and their harmonious co-existence with religion. In this very context is developed the teaching of 'assimilation' of its own kind of the main philosophical schools of ancient India into Vedanta as a certain central point. This teaching takes various forms—from Dayananda's straightforward assertion of the auxiliary position of various orthodox (*astika*) schools in regard to Vedanta and also of their differences though only in topics but not in the essence of the positions upheld to S. Radhakrishnan's far more subtle assertion that various philosophical schools are steps in the spiritual pyramid leading to Vedanta and that beneath the apparent dualism of many of these schools is latent monism (of the Vedantist type).<sup>25</sup>

Underlying this teaching are, firstly, the absolutization of syncretic tendencies revealed in Indian philosophy in the medieval (particularly later) period—tendencies at drawing together various schools on the basis of reinforcing of orthodox points in them and 'slurring over' of unorthodox points; and secondly, the ongoing practice of assigning all *astika* schools to 'auxiliaries' of their own kind of the main Vedic tradition.<sup>26</sup> But these schools, we see, should be assessed proceeding from the content of their teaching during the period of their development and not of decay (which incidentally is done by the author of the *Brahma-sutra* in his polemics with them). Even their 'orthodoxy' is at times more formal than substantial (which again is lucidly shown by Badarayana). As regards Radhakrishnan's observation on latent monism, the only thing true in that is that the dualism cannot indeed be considered the last word of philosophy (whether in India or in Europe). Behind the vast spectrum of dualistic schools of Indian philosophy (classical Samkhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva-Mimamsa) are hidden not one but two conflicting tendencies (frequently dominant in them being, besides, the tendency towards the materialistic and not the idealistic monism). It remains to remember that far back in the Upanishads we find not only

mystical-idealistic but also naturalistic pantheism formed earlier. And the echoes proper of ideas originating in the lap of this latter, are heard in the teachings of various *astika* (and partly, also *nastika*—of Jainism) schools.

Sometimes the neo-Vedantists touch really characteristic features of Indian philosophy, though they present these one-sidedly and at times in a distorted form. Thus, Vivekananda, and after him Aurobindo too, note such characteristics of Indian philosophical thought as (i) the important role which the data of *introspective psychology* play in it; and (ii) its '*practical*' (oriented towards life) trend.<sup>27</sup>

And, indeed, we already had grounds to be convinced (while studying the process of conception of philosophy in the Upanishads) also of the unusual maturity of introspection in ancient India and in its conceptual and terminological fixation. We shall only recall the many terms expressing various nuances of the concept of 'consciousness' ! No less developed, for instance, was also the concept of the 'sub-conscious' in yoga.<sup>28</sup> But the neo-Vedantists emphasize onesidedly the role of observations over the so-called *super-conscious* (or what in modern psychology has come to be denoted by the term 'Altered State of Consciousness'). Equally onesidedly, they link introspective observations with spiritualism. We incidentally find these observations as well as the 'shaping' of macrocosmos with the help of microcosmos also in systems having a clearly naturalist character (Samkhya, and in Asura's version—Panchashikha, and in the 'classical' version).

#### ORIENTATION OF LIFE

True also is the fact that for the most diverse schools of Indian philosophy it is extremely important to ascertain the necessary orientation of life of man and the ways of his inner perfection. It is, for instance, of interest that the controversies about various types of causal relationship, and also about the correlation of substance and its manifestations are, in these schools, directly associated with the question of correlation of

the 'real' and 'unreal', 'primary' and 'derived', 'higher' and 'lower' natures of man.<sup>29</sup> But the neo-Vedantists wrongly interpret this practical trend of Indian philosophy, characterizing it as the 'doctrine of *moksha*'. Here they again follow the foot-steps of the already formed Vedantic tradition (finding its expression also in the aforementioned work, of Madhusudan Sarasvati). According to this tradition, to man's four 'aims in life' are devoted respectively *Kama-shastra*, *Artha-shastra*, *Dharma-shastra* and *Moksha-shastra*, while the last one of these is supposed to cover all (in any case, orthodox) systems of philosophy.

However, it is not possible to accept the characterization of *darshanas* as *moksha-shastras*. First, not only in *nastika* there exists a system of *Lokayata*, putting forward the principles of *kama* and *artha* for eliciting the orientation of life; but even in *astika*, earlier *Purva-Mimamsa* upholds *dharma* and not at all *moksha* as the chief principle. Secondly, if for Vedanta the teaching of *moksha* is indeed of main significance, the same cannot be said, for instance, of *Nyaya* (where the focus is on the theory of knowledge) or of *Vaisheshika* (where the central point is the teaching of categories). Thirdly, the indiscriminate characterization of all *astika* systems as *moksha-shastras* 'slurs over' the varieties of the very concept of *moksha* and its 'minimalization' in various systems taking place depending upon the extent of consolidation of naturalist (and materialist) tendencies.<sup>30</sup>

#### VIVEKANANDA AND EUROPEAN CULTURE

It is interesting that one notes already in Vivekananda a peculiar comparison of Indian and European cultures on the basis of their psychological formulations *with regard to nature*. From his point of view, the West strives for dominance over external nature, for a fight against it, and for the maximal satisfaction of needs as a result of its subjugation to man. The East (personified by India) instead strives for man's dominance over his ownself, for restricting his needs, and for harmonizing 'inner' and 'external' nature. These thoughts found wonderful

continuance and development in the great Indian thinker and poet, Rabindranath Tagore.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the first in the East to get the Nobel Prize (1913) is, of course, far better known as a poet of world renown than a philosopher. But he, nonetheless, is the author of a whole series of philosophical works, extremely profound (though 'non-academic') in their own way.<sup>31</sup> In these works, on the whole, Tagore adheres to the Vedantic tradition, interpreting it in a spirit close to the ideas of the representatives of neo-Vedantist 'Renaissance' of the nineteenth century. His generalized philosophical formulations are typologically correlatable with the ideas of the followers of *bhakti-marga* and *bheda-abheda* (among the thinkers of the new times, we find a great deal of harmony with it in Ramakrishna).

Tagore stands for acceptance of reality both as indefinite and without qualities (*nirguna*) and, as endowed with form and qualities (*saguna*), *Brahman*. He defends the real existence of the world (*jagat*) derived from *Brahman* and of individual souls (*jiva*) as a contrast to *advaita maya-vada*. He also defends the thesis of the dominating role of the world play (*lila*) compared with illusion (*maya*) as a partial and subjugated moment in this play and regards the path of devotion (*bhakti*) as the highest of three possible ways of unity of man with *Brahman*.<sup>32</sup>

But all this still does not project the *specific nature* of Tagore's method of vision of the world—a vision which, as he himself constantly stressed, did not at all agree with the views of any classical commentators of the *Brahma-sutra*. We may begin with the fact that the religious side proper of his outlook is present in him in a considerably 'slurred' form compared with tradition. The concrete-dogmatic side of religion was of the least interest to him. It is characteristic, for instance, that the concept of *mukti*, so important for Vedanta, was treated by him usually not at all at the level of the traditional eschatology and soteriology, of utilitarian approach to the world.<sup>33</sup> It is difficult not to agree with V. S. Naravane that Tagore apparently digresses from the traditional, 'literal' acceptance of trans-

migration of souls (differing in this regard from a great majority of neo-Vedantists and coming closer to Rammohun Roy).<sup>34</sup>

It is important that if Vivekananda thought it possible for individual atheists to attain a higher moral level than that of 'ordinary' believers, and Aurobindo envisaged a purely temporary and partial use of atheistic ideas in purifying individual aspects of religion (from 'infra-rational' prejudices), Tagore at times even upheld the advantages of atheism on the whole as compared with 'confessional', 'institutionalized' religions.<sup>35</sup> Of course this did not concern the 'religion of heart' preached by him.

#### AFFINITY WITH SPIRITUAL SOURCE

Tagore himself stresses that right from his youth, he was, in his quests, inspired not by religion proper (to which he, in his words, was 'cold'), not by speculative judgements (to which he remained indifferent), but by pictures of surrounding *nature*, leading him ('like the Vedic ancestors') to the thought of man's affinity with the endless spiritual source embodied in him.<sup>36</sup> Many splendid pages are devoted both in the *Religion of Man* and in other philosophical works of Tagore to blissful description of the grandeur and beauty of living and inspiring nature. Tagore's perception of the world here echoes Tyutchev's:

Nature is not what you think it to be:

A mould, or a soulless face—

Nature has a soul, it has freedom,

It has love, it has a language.<sup>37</sup>

Both in his approach to nature, as well as in his outlook on the whole, Tagore shows preference for *emotional-aesthetic perception of the world*.<sup>38</sup> Characteristic in this sense is Tagore's conversation with Einstein in the course of which the latter strives to stress the 'different order' of scientific and aesthetic assimilation of the world, the fundamentality and objectivity (independence from man) of truths of science as different from the images of art, while the former denies such type of 'privilege' for scientific knowledge.<sup>39</sup> This denial does not incidentally



mean a negative attitude to science as such. In the late thirties (a few years after his talk with Einstein) Tagore writes a wonderful book, popularizing the attainments of Physics and Astronomy where he tries to synthesize the scientific understanding of nature with its poetic vision.<sup>40</sup>

Most frequently Tagore is not so much against science as against *scientism*, the 'cult of science', allied to absolutization of pragmatic, utilitarian, 'cold-hearted rational' formulations. But at times this polemic is not merely a vindication of the importance of other (besides science) modes of assimilation of the world but a defence of its own kind of *religion* (may be, minimalized and 'toned down') in face of science. This also came to the fore in his polemic with Einstein, though, incidentally, the latter, noticing the dimness of Tagore's views, vacillating between purely aesthetic and religious points of view, half jokingly and half seriously characterized Tagore's position as 'less religious' than his own. . . .

All these characteristics of Tagore's outlook influenced also his approach to the problem of correlation of cultures of India and Europe (East and West).<sup>41</sup> Most fundamentally, this problem was discussed by him in *Sadhana*. Here Tagore strives to show the difference between the two types of culture (and civilization), proceeding from the difference of formulations in relation to nature. These formulations are compared by him with the attitude of two travellers to the road: for one (East) it is a part of movement towards the aim, something that brings him closer to his objective (and has thereby a positive sense), for the other (West) this very road is an obstacle, a hindrance, something negative, that which must be done away with and left behind.<sup>42</sup>

#### ATTITUDE TO NATURE

The attitude of the West to *nature*, according to Tagore, is associated principally with *conflict*, *struggle*, *subjugation*, *use* (with the help of technology and science). In its 'extreme'

form this is an attitude to natural things simply as objects which satisfy the needs, as something alien, opposed to man, and when utilitarian use is not possible, as something indifferent in principle. The result of such an attitude, according to Tagore, is the breach of man from the basic forms of life (and from 'pre-human' in general), alienation from sources, conflict with the natural source within, the internal emptiness. The fight against nature and against one's ownself is 'supplemented' by the fight of people against one another, and of nations against nations, and by formation of 'soulless mechanisms' of modern European states which, according to Tagore, are 'embodied with science'<sup>43</sup> (that is, by absolutization and 'closing' of one of the above-mentioned means of 'division and rule', fight and control).

Different is the case with East. . . . Here, in India, as Tagore assumes, the dominating formulation in relation to nature is not contrast but *unity*, not fight but harmony, not subjugation but *collaboration*, not accumulation of consumer goods but *understanding of man through nature* and of nature through man. And Tagore paints in bright colours the non-utilitarian attitude to nature (dominant in Indian culture in his view) in its most varied manifestations. Here also is the 'openness' before the elements surrounding man (earth, fire, water, air), as phenomena not only of physical but also 'emotional' environment; here is also a worship of the beautiful corners of nature, and pilgrimage to them; here is also non-violence with regard to everything living (*ahimsa*). In India, according to Tagore, nature is not so much the means as the aim, something like a beautiful symphony in which all notes are necessary; and the human 'note' supplements and not constraints all others, taking the composition to perfection.<sup>44</sup>

Such in general outline is the conception of Tagore. It is natural that in respect of cultural formulations he is for the 'Eastern' (Indian) formulation, though he also considers it possible and useful to assimilate at least partly the attainments of the West in the material field<sup>45</sup> (that is, 'learning' and

'assimilation' of its own kind of Western science and technology by the East).

It is not difficult to notice here a number of weak points in Tagore's conception. These include also the idealization of ancient Indian civilization ('ecological equilibrium' was achieved in it not at all by idyllic means and in no way without infringing upon the interests of the lower strata of society), and the 'unfolding' of the real link between the attitude to nature and social relations and the imaginary primacy of psychological formulations in comparison with the economic basis of social life.

It is interesting that when there arises the question of causes of difference of the said formulations in East and West, Tagore refers to the 'geographical factor' but interprets it differently at different places of his works. The reference here is sometimes to the opposition, 'shortage-surplus' (the severe nature of the European North and the generous tropical nature of India), sometimes to the contrast between the 'sea' (Europe) and 'forest' (India) nature, and sometimes to the contrast of tropical heat and moderate climate.<sup>46</sup> The obscurity in the treatment of these causes is at times made up for by teleological reference to the 'economic' method of action of nature, not wishing to follow the same path in the West and in the East.<sup>47</sup>

It would, however, be a mistake not to see behind all these weaknesses and inconsistencies of Tagore's conception a number of profound and *important* ideas. Tagore is right both when he emphasizes the deepening 'crisis' in man's attitude to nature within the bourgeois civilization, and when he defends a number of truly perennial *values* of Indian culture—no matter if these values were often expressed in inadequate or mystified form. But harmonious with our times remain the ideas of cosmic subjugation of life and man, of multi-dimensional unity of all forms of life, their endless 'mutual reflection' and mutual enrichment, revelation and realization of in-depth possibilities of life in man, and lastly, man's responsibility for the destiny of the entire 'universum of the living', the need of 'respect for

life' of great and small inhabitants of this universum. The achievement of harmonious relations between *man* and *nature* is one of the most important tasks of the future. In the words of Marx, 'communism... is the *true* solution of the contradictions between man and nature....'<sup>48</sup>

Tagore's school in 'forest surroundings' at Santiniketan is a living embodiment of the ideals of the poet himself and of the humanist values of Indian culture upheld by him. These values belong not only to the Indian people but also to their friends, that is, also to our people for whom Tagore ever had the kindest, most friendly feelings. These values belong to the whole of mankind.

#### NOTES

1. See, for instance, *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library* (Hereafter—SAECL), vol. XIV, p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 50 (cf. S. Radhakrishnan, *Kalki or the Future of Civilization*, Ludhiana, 1973, p. 7; 1st ed.: 1948).
3. For a brilliant characterization and criticism of such routine notions of 'non-spirituality' of materialism, see: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Works* (in Russian), vol. 21, p. 290.
4. See, in particular, VCW, vol. IV, pp. 332-41, 371-413; vol. V, pp. 344-439; vol. VIII, pp. 122-41.
5. In more details see: V. S. Kostyuchenko, *Vivekananda* (in Russian), M., 1977, pp. 152-63.
6. See, in particular: Sri Aurobindo, *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (SABCL, vol. XIV, pp. 1-384); R. Tagore, *Sadhana*, London, 1914; R. Tagore, *Nationalism*, London, 1921, 1st ed.: 1917; S. Radhakrishnan, *East and West in Religion*, London, 1954; 1st ed.: 1933 (hereafter—EWR); S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Oxford, 1958; 1st ed.: 1939 (hereafter—ERW). Cf. also: S. Radhakrishnan, *East and West. Some Reflections*, London, 1955 (hereafter—EW). Although the main ideas of correlation of Indian and European culture were also formulated by S. Radhakrishnan somewhat later than Aurobindo and Tagore (mainly in the 30's), yet *typologically* these are sufficiently close to them (and also to ideas expressed by Radhakrishnan himself in his earlier books far back in the 20's).
7. SABCL, vol. XIV, pp. 47-8.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
9. In our days this has been convincingly shown by one of the leading foreign Indologists, A. L. Basham. See Basham, *The Wonder That was India* (Russian ed.: M., 1960).

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10. SABCL, vol. XIV, p. 52.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 52 (cf. p. 80).
13. See, in particular: D. Chattopadhyaya, *What is Living and What is Dead in Indian Philosophy; Indian Atheism* (Russian ed.: M., 1973).
14. D. Chattopadhyaya, *What is Living and What is Dead in Indian Philosophy*, p. 245.
15. *Ibid.*
16. EW, p. 107.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
18. SABCL, vol. XIV, pp. 4, 147.
19. EWR, pp. 43-72.
20. ERW, pp. 210-15.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 327-30.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 336.
23. See, for instance, SABCL, vol. XIV, pp. 76-7, 83, 122; ERW, p. 21, 313, 316-17.
24. The *tolerance* of Hinduism is specially noted also by some of its Soviet researchers. See, for instance, N. R. Guseva, *Mnogolikaya Indiya* [Many-Faced India], M., 1980, p. 81.
25. See S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (Russian ed.: vol. I, M., 1956, p. 20; vol. II, M., 1957, p. 693).
26. See, for instance, the already mentioned treatise of Madhusudana Sarasvati.
27. SABCL, vol. XIV, pp. 57, 68.
28. See H. Aranya's commentary on *Yoga-sutras*.—Swami Hariharananda Aranya, *Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali*, Calcutta, 1963.
29. A B C D E F G   advaita madhyamika satkarya asatkarya Lokayata  
Here A means the teaching of Jainas (*sadasatkarya-vada*), C—the teaching of the Buddhists (undermining the constancy and denying the substantialness), B—the teaching of Vedanta (particularly *advaita*) as the opposite pole, F and G—the teachings of more moderate representatives of *satkarya-vada* (Samkhya, Yoga) and *asatkarya-vada* (Nyaya, Vaisheshika). Since the denying of the reality of *modifications* or *substance* leads in the ultimate end to the 'fall' of both these categories, the 'extremities converge together' advaita and madhyamika lead to some *irrationalistically* treated 'spiritual' nature of man (D). The denying of so called 'higher' ('spiritual') nature of man in Lokayata (E) is an opposition of this solution.
30. See *adhyayas* 1 & 2.
31. Besides the ones already mentioned, see: *Creative Unity*, Madras, 1959 (1st ed.: 1922); *The Personality*, London, 1959—and, in particular, the series of Hibbert lectures given by Tagore almost 'parallel' to S. Radhakrishnan and published under the title *The Religion of Man*, London, 1949 (1st ed.: 1931).
32. All these ideas are already expressed in *Sadhana*. For more details see: *The Religion of Man*, pp. 25-50, 109-18, 205-06, 226, 230.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
34. V. S. Naravane, *Rabindranath Tagore : A Philosophical Study*, Allahabad, 1946, p. 221.

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35. See R. Tagore, *Letters from Russia* (Russian ed.: M., 1956, pp. 53-4).
36. R. Tagore, *The Religion of Man*, p. 92.
37. F. I. Tyutchev, *Lirika* [Lyrics], M., 1965, vol. I, p. 81.
38. A. D. Litman, *Filosofskie vzglyady Rabindranata Tagora* [Philosophical Views of Rabindranath Tagore],—in: *Rabindranat Tagor. K stoletiyu so dnya rozhdeniya* [Rabindranath Tagore Birth Centenary Volume], M., 1961, p. 89.
39. R. Tagore, *The Religion of Man*, pp. 222-23.
40. R. Tagore, *Our Universe*, Bombay, 1969 (the work was written in 1937).
41. Like Aurobindo, Tagore, at least in his works written in the first quarter of the century (including *Sadhana* and *Nationalism*), often equates these antitheses.
42. R. Tagore, *Sadhana*, p. 6.
43. R. Tagore, *Nationalism*, p. 17.
44. R. Tagore, *Sadhana*, p. 7.
45. R. Tagore, *Nationalism*, ch. II, III.
46. R. Tagore, *Nationalism*, p. 97; R. Tagore, *Creative Unity*, p. 46; R. Tagore, *The Religion of Man*, pp. 86-7.
47. R. Tagore, *Sadhana*, p. 11-2.
48. K. Marx, F. Engels, *Iz rannikh proizvedenii* [From Early Works], p. 588.

## MODERN VIEWS OF VIVEKANANDA IN THE CONTEXT OF ENLIGHTENMENT IDEOLOGY OF INDIA

E. N. KOMAROV

THE social views which, together with a criticism of colonial regime and feudalism, also contained a criticism of the bourgeois structure, started spreading in the progressive social circles of India back in the late nineteenth century. This aspect of development of Indian social thought of the new times has been studied very little, particularly because the emergence of anti-capitalist tendency had a purely secondary position and did not play any independent role. The growing democratic movement of national liberation in India was objectively directed not against exploitation in general but against its two concrete historical forms—colonial and feudal exploitation and the respective political and social relations. It was primarily against the colonial power. The capitalist relations nonetheless had already started asserting themselves in the Indian society, revealing the contradictions inherent in it; and the British power and colonial exploitation were nothing but the origin of capitalist structure, though outside India. Here, already in the second half of the nineteenth century, some Indians familiarized themselves with the ideas of socialist movement developing in the West, which influenced their social views. Such in the most general form were the conditions which, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, led a number of Indian thinkers and social leaders to make a definite criticism of the bourgeois society. This criticism was still subjective—‘sentimental’ (Lenin), that is, moralist, and resulted only in purely utopian social formulations. But, at the same time, it was directly associated with the development of national liberation and democratic tendencies, and expressed these tendencies in its own way and even contributed quite a great

deal to their growth. In other words, the criticism of bourgeois society by progressive Indian thinkers and leaders of the Indian national liberation movement on the border of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and frequently also later, was itself an auxiliary of its own kind to their essentially bourgeois-democratic programme of liquidation of colonial subjugation of the country and feudal oppression, which in the conditions of that time would indeed have meant not overcoming but instead developing fast and more broadly the bourgeois relations. We proceed here from V. I. Lenin's well-known position which characterized 'socialist dreams' of Russian *Narodniks* [populists] and Chinese revolutionary democrat Sun Yat-sen as a 'supplement to democratism'.<sup>1</sup> Showing the utopian, 'dreamy' character of anti-capitalist views of *Narodniks*, Lenin saw an important *historical contribution* of *Narodism* [Populism] in that it 'took a big *step forward* against heritage, *by bringing up*, before social thought, for solution, problems which the preservers of heritage partly still could not (in their time) raise, and partly did not raise, and will not raise because of the narrow outlook characteristic of them'.<sup>2</sup> We feel, V. I. Lenin's positions on enlightenment (on 'heritage' of enlighteners) and *Narodism* in Russia have a great significance also for understanding the processes of development of social thought of India of the new times. In particular, these help in ascertaining the historical role of a number of vanguard Indian thinkers and social leaders who came out with criticism of bourgeois society, which, as also in the case of Russian *Narodniks*, was of a 'sentimental' character.

#### UTOPIAN SOCIAL IDEAS

Examining in the present article the social views of the earliest representatives of these tendencies in the Indian social thought—Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya and Swami Vivekananda—we shall try to show that they brought up social problems which were totally new for the India of that time and had remained beyond the vision of their predecessors



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and contemporaries holding liberal-enlightening positions. The moralistic criticism of bourgeois society contained in the statements of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya and Swami Vivekananda, and also some of their utopian social ideas, were further developed in the early twentieth century and later in the views of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Bipin Chandra Pal, Ananda Coomaraswamy, and other Indian thinkers and leaders of national liberation movement. This criticism of bourgeois society, despite its purely subjective character and utopianness of related social conceptions, not only helped in asserting national liberation and democratic ideas but established also a definite anti-bourgeois tradition in Indian social thought, which was an essential stage of development.

In the sphere of ideology the process of transition from feudalism to capitalism first expressed itself in India, as in its time also in the West, in the affirmation of the social-political views of enlightening nature amongst the vanguard social circles. Their first publicist was the eminent thinker and social leader Rammohun Roy (1772-1833). A specific feature of enlightenment as a historical stage in the development of social thought is the acceptance of bourgeois relations as absolute bliss, viz. the notions that liquidation of feudal and affirmation of bourgeois structures 'will create on this earth an empire of universal well-being'.<sup>3</sup> Such notions were invariably dominant in progressive Indian social thought up to the 70s of the nineteenth century, and were later a characteristic of the bourgeois-liberal leaders ('moderates') who, before the beginning of the modern times, usually held a dominant position in national social-political organization, including the largest of them representing the Indian National Congress established in 1885.

### BANNER OF SOCIAL PROGRESS

At a specific historical stage, the enlightenment in India, as also in other countries, was the real banner of social pro-

gress; it affirmed advanced ideas of the time in the most diverse domains of life. Together with this, it should be stressed that, in the conditions of the colonial country, the enlightenment was from the very beginning marked by a certain duality. Directed against feudal orders, contrasting to them the 'European', that is, bourgeois forms of life, and advocating the 'all-sided Europeanization',<sup>4</sup> it objectively opposed not only feudalism but also colonial dominance and prepared the conditions for the development of democratic national liberation movement. But subjectively, many Indian enlighteners, and later liberal social leaders, held different positions in relation to the British power. The acceptance of bourgeois structures as absolute blessing led to idealization of the already established bourgeois structure in the West, particularly to idealization of England,<sup>5</sup> which in its time was characteristic of the enlighteners of a number of backward countries, including also the independent ones. But in India such an idealization in its turn gave rise to illusions that the British power would help in establishing analogous, that is, bourgeois structures and the British dominance itself was accordingly considered a blessing or at least a lesser evil for India. Of course, the chief role here was played by objective (although not absolute) economic and political disinterestedness of the still weak Indian bourgeoisie in preserving British power, but no less vitally significant was also the subjective factor, viz. the illusions in respect of bourgeois England's role in India. In such conditions the criticism of colonial regime (autocratic power of alien rulers, national oppression, and colonial exploitation) from the side of the enlighteners, and later liberal-bourgeois leaders, though conducive to the awakening of national self-consciousness, was nonetheless necessarily of a limited character. This criticism did not rise to complete rejection of British power and to demand for independence.<sup>6</sup>

Because of these reasons further development of the national movement, leading in the sphere of ideology to an appraisal of British dominance in keeping with the reality, just as an

evil and not a blessing for India, necessarily evoked and presumed not only a criticism of colonial regime but criticism also of the same social order which had given rise to colonial dominance, and now had made for itself a place in Indian society itself. This is indeed what happened. The emergence of Indian radical nationalism ('extremism') in the last third of the nineteenth century was accompanied by the appearance of anti-capitalist views of a subjective utopian character. It was the radical nationalists ('extremists'), calling for a decisive struggle against British power and for involvement of the masses in the national movement, who were just the bearers of the views of this kind. They mainly came from the emerging petty bourgeois intelligentsia, which in a great or small measure reflected the moods of the masses, their legitimate protest against the intensification of exploitation in the course of development of capitalism, specially tormenting in the colonial country. The nationalistic trend of their subjective anti-capitalist views, giving to the latter a purely utopian character, did at the same time condition the peculiar fact that later the growing national bourgeoisie started actively supporting the leaders, who made such subjective but 'sentimental' criticism of capitalism, as national leaders.

#### DISINTEGRATING FEUDALISM

The development of bourgeois relations, creating their own social contradictions, in the first instance, however, led to the sharpening precisely of the contradictions of disintegrating feudalism, and in India also of the contradictions of a colonial regime. It resulted in overall intensification of exploitation of the masses, remaining mainly feudal and colonial. On the boundary of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in India, many persons were already realizing the fact of sharpening of social contradictions as a result of the development of capitalism in the country. Thus, in 1907, in the memorandum of the Lawyers' Association in an extremely remote district of Bengal, viz. Sylhet, it was directly stated that 'steady conflicts between

landlords and tenants, capitalists and workers...’ were building up in India.’ But this already was a sort of an outcome of the preceding development of capitalist relations in India, which led to a number of strikes of industrial and transport workers and also to the formation in the early twentieth century (1906-10) of the earliest, true, still very weak, professional unions.

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The first reaction to the newly emerged evil of ‘bourgeoisness’ (if one may use Dostoevsky’s expression) came from some Indian thinkers much earlier—in the 70s-80s of the nineteenth century. This is most fully seen from the social views of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya (1833-94), the progenitor of Bengali creative prose, brilliant publicist, the ideological precursor of a radical trend in the Indian national movement.

The son of a rich land-owner serving in colonial administration, Bankimchandra was one of the two earliest products of Calcutta University, having graduated from there in 1858. He joined as assistant chief of the district (collector) and an assistant judge (the highest posts that an Indian could be allowed to hold), and in the beginning combined his service with literary pastime. In 1872 Bankimchandra started publishing a literary journal *Bangadarshan* (‘Mirror of Bengal’) which published almost all his works, soon winning wide recognition in Bengal. By birth Bankimchandra belonged to that top hierarchy of national intelligentsia who had started emerging back in the first half of the nineteenth century amongst landlords and big businessmen, who had received their education in the newly opened educational institutions of the European type. From amongst these alone came such first Indian enlighteners as Rammohun Roy, and later such national liberation leaders as Dadabhai Naoroji. But Bankimchandra had a different standpoint and was the spokesman of a new tendency in Indian social thought—a tendency which started originating in the 70s.

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At this time there were also noted in India social shifts conditioned by ever wider penetration of bourgeois relations into various spheres of socio-economic life, particularly in such areas as Bengal in the East and Maharashtra in the West, extending to the main port cities of Calcutta and Bombay. Here already in operation were the earliest factories, and there arose capitalist towns the main mass of whose population had for a long time been the petty bourgeois elements of India. A new national intelligentsia (something like the *raznochinetz*\*), who had cruelly suffered from national oppression and was now having a semi-starved subsistence, was also beginning to emerge from amongst them.

### ANTI-FEUDAL MASS ACTION

In the 70s in India, again in the first instance in Maharashtra and Bengal, there rose a new wave of anti-feudal mass action of peasants, then also assuming an anti-colonial trend. This anti-feudal wave resulted from disintegration of feudal relations and in some measure started losing the former character of medieval peasants' movements, and was associated more with economic interests of peasants as petty producer of goods, rising against feudal-landlord oppression and arbitrariness. Coming to the fore in the national intelligentsia were people who directly declared their sympathies for peasants or even led the peasants' mass actions, —for instance, Vasudev Balwant Phadke in Maharashtra. But in conditions of colonial country this new intelligentsia, naturally, voiced its main protest, above all, against colonial subjugation.

### ASPIRATIONS OF PETTY BOURGEOIS

Bankimchandra was one of the earliest to give expression to the national and social aspirations of a petty bourgeois democracy, beginning to take shape in India, though still extremely weak and unstable. The sprouts of democratism had only been just gathered through medieval notions on the

[\*Intellectual not belonging to the gentry in nineteenth century Russia.]

one hand and liberal-enlightening illusions on the other. And a new ideological position, different from the position of the top hierarchy of the propertied classes and of the departing feudal and emerging bourgeois class, was nonetheless already being determined. Bankimchandra called for a firm assertion of national independence and social emancipation of the masses, ruthlessly ridiculed the political ineffectiveness of liberal leaders and their requests and protests made to the alien rulers. He called upon the youth to 'learn to sting' and make effective attacks. Along with this, Bankimchandra was the first or one of the first in India, to subject to criticism Western civilization, above all, as a social structure giving rise to colonial plunder and national oppression. The 'European patriotism is a truly devilish affair,' he wrote. 'The goal of European patriotism consists in plundering foreign society and enriching its own. . . . A strong society lives at the expense of plunder of a weak society. I do not here have in mind the barbarian society, it is civilized Europe which is acting like this.'<sup>8</sup>

Criticism of the plundering nature of the 'European,' that is bourgeois civilization, was in Bankimchandra and also in other Indian thinkers linked with the realization now dawning of the evil of bourgeoisness, which was now asserting itself in India herself under the aegis of the colonial power. This first, still primitive realization of the contradictions of bourgeois society showed itself in the moralistic criticism of the omnipotence of money, represented in India above all by her British rulers. In the words of Kamalakanta—hero of the typical lyrical-publicist story bearing the same name (1875), who combines in him the traits of a 'small man' of bourgeois society and the traditional Indian ascetic, homeless and philosophizing, —Bankimchandra says: 'Whatever we may take up—newspapers, journals, speeches, debates, lectures—everything that we read and hear, whether in English or in Bengali, harps only on one theme: material prosperity. *Tram-tram, boom-boom!* Worship prosperity! *Tram-tram, boom-boom!* Raise mountains of money! Money is the power, money is the sweet stuff, money

is honour, the measure of gain. Money is the law, the worship to fortune, money is freedom from troubles, and in money is our salvation!... Money is work. . . . Do not follow that road: there will be no money in the country. Follow this road: there will be more money in the country. *Tram-tram, boom-boom!* Multiply money, multiply money! Railways and telegraph generate capital, pray to them in temples!... Money is our soul, and we have none other. Our souls are flattened and coined in the mint. Material prosperity is in money. Pray for material prosperity! And the holy priests in this divine service are the red-bearded and red-moustached beings, named Englishmen. . . . The prayers for raising of praises to prosperity should be taken from the *Puranas* of Adam Smith and *Tantras* of Mill. The English papers in such divine service play the role of drummers, the newspapers of Bengal strike the gong, education and diligence go as offerings to the idol, and the heart becomes a patient goat. The result of the worship to prosperity is lightless hell in this world and in another.<sup>9</sup>

The protest against the growing power of money stands out as the main theme of speeches of a great number of social leaders and publicists of India of the last third of the nineteenth century, though their views also had definite differences. In Rajnarayan Basu this protest is in a great measure turned 'inside' into the Indian society itself. But perceptible in it is the grief of an aristocrat on the patriarchal order being lost and its idealization which was not characteristic for Bankimchandra.

Rajnarayan Basu with melancholy mentions the decay of patriarchal social relations under the force of power of money and notes with dissatisfaction the disappearance of the previous humility of the 'common folk'. In his work *Past and Present* (1874)<sup>10</sup> he wrote: 'The modern people have very high egoism. These days, in villages, the mutual good relations of people have deteriorated compared with the past. . . . Earlier, they together shared their joys and sorrows, helped one another. This is no longer there. . . . The common folk no longer have the previous moral nobility and fear of god. The sense of

personal attachment which was there in the past in the relations between master and servant is also disappearing. One of its main reasons is the conduct of the masters. They no longer have a human attitude towards the servants, as earlier, and imitate the manners of the British.... We can say without exaggeration that egoism is another name of modern civilization.<sup>11</sup>

In Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), the leader of radical nationalists in Maharashtra, who in 1900's became the political leader of the radical trend on an all-India level, the protest against the power of money is turned directly against the British. It is extremely important that while in Indian liberal-enlightened circles from the time of Rammohun Roy it was a tradition to see in the British 'a blessed people' marked by 'all virtues of enlightenment', Tilak called them the 'great nation of shopkeepers'. But characteristic is also the fact that, seeing in the British the main bearers of the power of money, he compared them with professional Indian traders and money-lenders from the Marwari community, placing both of them in the same social category. Tilak's newspaper *Maratha* wrote in 1897: 'People belonging to this great nation of shopkeepers can behave only like Marwaris of India. One cannot expect from them any concern for those who are around them. 'Press the purse more tightly,'—this is what the Marwaris in Europe advise those leaving the shores of the island.<sup>12</sup> They are great worshippers of gold and silver, and understand well all the charm of the words of Iago: "Put only silver in my pocket."<sup>13</sup>

In their criticism of the omnipotence of money, Bankimchandra, Tilak, and other national leaders who had similar standpoint, reflected the moods prevalent in the late nineteenth century amongst the broadest strata of people. Such moods appeared most sharply and consciously in the midst of the growing lower (of different ranks) intelligentsia. A brilliant instance of this is found in the lines from the autobiography of the Maratha Damodar Chapekar. Coming from a one-time respected but later ruined Brahmin family, not having



been able to complete his study because of poverty, and later a poor wandering actor, he organized in Maharashtra the first illegal nationalist group for struggle against the British, and in 1897, along with his brother, killed the British official Rand, taking revenge for the cruelty of the British powers over the population of the city of Poona at the time of a plague epidemic. In jail, before his execution, Damodar Chapekar wrote: 'All possible misfortunes come to a person with no money. Brothers quarrel with him, relatives and friends evade him, people of respect despise him...and throw unheard-of calumnies at his door, and the latter are believed simply because he is very poor....If a rich man does some wrongs, these are regarded as right actions and the doer is praised for them.'<sup>14</sup>

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The social protest, aroused by the rupture of patriarchal relations in the second half of the nineteenth century, rose in the thick of the masses, the character of whose formation was still in many ways medieval. This protest reflected itself in the dogmas of religious preceptors-reformers coming from the midst of the people, almost or totally unfamiliar with the 'European spirit',—such, for example, as Ramakrishna in Bengal or Ramalingaswami in Tamilnadu. Their dogmas, chiefly still medieval by nature of thought, in some measure already included elements of rationalism, and were also marked by specifically Indian religious universalism affirming equality of all religions as 'ways to God'. But with all this, the message of uncovctousness, almost their most important component, did, like all dogma on the whole often acquire a nationalistic colour. Remarkable in this respect is the life of Ramakrishna (d. 1886). Initially quite commonplace in the social sense, though possessing rare yogic gifts, and a priest in a temple of Goddess Kali near Calcutta, Ramakrishna used to meet there numerous pilgrims visiting the temple on their way to the famous holy place of the Hindus, the Jagannath temple in Puri (Orissa).

According to the testimony of the well-known Bengali social leader, Sivanath Sastri, the meetings and talks with these people brought about a turning point in Ramakrishna's frame of mind. 'The idea which struck him the most and got invariably injected into his consciousness', continues Sivnath Sastri, 'consisted in that one should literally avoid the poison of "*kamini* and *kanchan*", that is, women and wealth.'<sup>15</sup> Ramakrishna believed that the rich, just like dogs, bulls and drunkards, were such as a righteous person should avoid.<sup>16</sup> He had the habit of taking in one hand some dust, and in another some coins and repeating: 'Dust is money, money is dust,' concentrating as a yogi on this thought, and then throwing away the money and the dust into the river.<sup>17</sup>

Almost in the same way, the Tamil poet and yogi, Ramalingaswami<sup>18</sup> too preached uncovetousness, and said that once getting money he 'threw it into the well, hurled it into the pond'.

We are citing these instances to show how deeply the Indians were astonished by the incursion of bourgeois relations and how widespread was the confusion over the ruthlessly growing power of money. This was also sensed by the literary genius of the nineteenth century Bengal, Bankimchandra, and by the Marathi politician and scholar, Tilak, the future leader of radical nationalists, and by the half-poor *raznochinetz*, the first Indian 'terrorist' Damodar Chapekar, and also by essentially still medieval popular preceptors, Ramakrishna and Ramalingaswami. Much, and sometimes even the foremost in these moods was from the later medieval period in which India still virtually lived. But a totally different era had already long ushered in the world over, and in India herself, despite preservation of dominance of late medieval relations in many fields of life, the earliest factories were already in operation, the first thousands of miles of rail lines had already been laid, and the first universities had been opened on the European model. This is why, along with most primitive realization of contradictions of the now-shaped bourgeois society, there had

also started developing a tendency towards intensification of its criticism associated with the origin of democratic movement.

#### SOCIAL VIEWS OF BANKIMCHANDRA

This is exactly what found its expression in Bankimchandra's social views. The confusion over national enslavement and growing power of money was in him combined with the most sincere aspirations for social emancipation of masses, suppressed under feudal landlords' oppression. His social views are a brilliant example of the democratic content full of patriotism. These seemed to have been the precursor of politically formulated tendency of the next generation of progressive national leaders to depend upon the masses, a tendency distinguishing the radical nationalists from liberal leaders in the national movement. Bankimchandra started directly and at once associating the destiny of his country with the position of the people. In the article *The Peasant of Bengal* (1873) he wrote: 'Welfare of the country? Whose welfare is this? I see your and my welfare. But are you and I really the country? How many like us are there in our country? And how many in them are peasants? If we do not count them, who will remain? It is they who are the essence of the country. A vast majority of its people is peasants. What can you and I do? And if they all take up the matter, we shall then see who becomes what and what will happen then? If there is no prosperity for them, there can be no well-being of the country.'<sup>19</sup>

A sincere sympathy for the masses, and an aspiration to defend their interests led Bankimchandra to raise a totally new problem for India: Who will reap the fruits of economic changes, that is, of bourgeois development, taking place in the country? The article *The Peasant of Bengal* concluded with the following words: 'We have shown that the favourable condition of the country has improved a great deal. The unique goddess of agriculture is showing her good disposition towards us, and by her kindness wealth is coming in good amount. The ruler (that is, the British power) is a land-owner,

a merchant, a money lender, and grabs this wealth. It enriches him. It is only the peasant who gets nothing. 999 persons out of 1,000 get no benefit out of it. Let anyone who wishes to glorify this progress do it; I cannot. I shall not glorify it till I do not see the well-being of these 999 persons.'<sup>20</sup>

Such a formulation of the question meant an important step in the development of Indian social thought. Although Bankimchandra still did not in many ways realize the retarding economic role of colonial dominance, his approach to change taking place in India created a gap between him and liberal leaders with their notions of bourgeois progress being the way to universal prosperity.

#### EGALITARIAN TEACHING

It is therefore quite understandable and natural that Bankimchandra had a sympathetic interest in egalitarian and socialist teachings. In 1879 he published a sociological work *Samya* [Equality] which became widely known in Bengal. In this work he expounded the egalitarian views of Rousseau, the teachings of utopian-socialists Fourier, Owen, Saint Simon, and spoke about Louis Blanc and Kabet and even mentioned the Internationale, though, true, not naming its founders.<sup>21</sup> Here the following circumstance is extremely important. The positions of utopian socialists about generalization of the means of production and distribution were expounded by Bankimchandra somewhat with passion, rather on the academic level. Of course, when in his exposition he talks of social ownership of land, it is an entirely different matter. Here one clearly senses his immediate, vital interest. Besides, Bankimchandra considered the position of social ownership of land a basic one, the starting point for real communism. 'Declaring that "land belongs to all", Rousseau cast the seed of a great tree which started bringing ever more fresh fruits,' wrote Bankimchandra. 'Today Europe is full of them. Communism is the fruit of this tree. The Internationale is the fruit of this tree.' Further, Bankimchandra explains to the reader: 'In our country and

in other countries property is usually personal. My house, your land, his tree, etc. But this does not mean that there can generally be no other property. In place of private property there can be property of all people on the whole. The land which feeds all, is created not for some one person in the same way as it is not made for ten or fifteen land-owners. It is therefore necessary that all have equal rights to land.'<sup>22</sup>

#### SOCIAL OWNERSHIP OF LAND

Concentration of attention mainly on land relations and Bankimchandra's urge for the ideal of social ownership of land are fully explained by the historical conditions of the nineteenth century India. As a result of colonial subjugation of the country, the decay of feudalism was not accompanied by adequate development of bourgeois relation of the capitalist city. In the second half of the nineteenth century India was already basically involved in world capitalist trade, had extremely significant cultural relations with the bourgeois world, which had its effect on the development of social consciousness. Nevertheless, in India herself, large industry and capitalist city had only just originated, and the antagonisms inherent in them, primarily the struggle between labour and capital, had not yet substantially shown themselves in the social-political life of the country. The idea of social ownership of the means of production, and particularly of the land, taken by Bankimchandra from Rousseau and utopian socialists, acquired an anti-feudal trend in his exposition, and recalled the demand for nationalization of land in the treatise of Sun Yat-sen and Russian *Narodniks* [populists], although in Bankimchandra this idea was expressed far more mildly. 'The land which does not belong to anyone, was shared amongst themselves by land cultivators. It is necessary to see what it led to'<sup>23</sup>—these are the words which open the main section of the work *Samya* (Equality), in which the author exposes the land-owner's exploitation, the money-lending evil and the chaos prevailing amongst the peasants of Bengal. The very idea of

equality, ardently defended by him, was directed against various manifestations of feudal inequality and in particular against the inequality of land-owners and peasants. Bankimchandra's understanding of equality is accordingly bourgeois democratic—the equality of 'rights and opportunities'. He wrote: 'The equality of rights is necessary. Possessing the capacities, nobody should get stuck up for want of rights. The path of progress must be open to all.'<sup>24</sup>

#### DREAM OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

With all this, just in the context of the expression of protest against colonial and feudal oppression and for social emancipation of the masses, and also undoubtedly under the influence of advanced social thoughts in the West, there emerged a new dream about a society of social justice, and the socialist ideal started taking shape. Speaking of socialist teachings Bankimchandra prophesied in 1879: 'At the moment all this is unacceptable to a majority of people, and is ridiculed by the foolish. But a day will come when such orders would get established in the whole world.'<sup>25</sup>

It should be said that Bankimchandra was not the only one in India to have sympathies for ideas of public ownership of land. Such ideas had been expressed in the 80s in Tilak's newspaper *Kesari* in Marathi.<sup>26</sup> But in Bankimchandra, and probably in other Indian leaders of that time, the idea of public ownership of land or of the denial of the right of inheritance did not still represent a formulated system of views and did not, in any case, become a social-political platform. These were rather ideal aspirations of the future.

As regards concrete demands in the sphere of agrarian relations, however, Bankimchandra here essentially had the same standpoint as the national-bourgeois organizations of the second half of the nineteenth century, under liberal leadership, which at best demanded constraints on feudal exploitation and land-owner's arbitrariness, but did not in any way raise the question of liquidation of landlord's right of ownership of land.

Nonetheless, just in the 70s, obviously under the influence of anti-feudal peasant mass actions in Bengal, some Bengalis called for complete liquidation of landlord's rights to land and establishment of a private peasants' ownership of land both in Bengal and the rest of India. One of these, Abhaya Charan Das (he called himself *ryot*, that is, a peasant), developed even a detailed plan of such land reform.<sup>27</sup> But like other representatives of the emerging national intelligentsia of that time, they were still very far from the masses. Nobly and firmly defending the peasants, these leaders, most radical in the social sense, including Abhaya Charan Das, continued to harbour illusions of the enlightenment in respect both of consequences of liquidation of feudal orders (the universal bliss after the establishment of private peasants' ownership of land), as well as of the role of the British power in India. They addressed their demands for liquidation in India for landlords' rights to land to British rulers and public opinion in England, which foredoomed their actions to failure.

Even such actions themselves were extremely rare. So far as is known, after the 70s of the nineteenth century and right up to the modern period (20s of the twentieth century) the demand for liquidation of landlords' right to land as such (and not simply for restricting the amounts of rent and arbitrariness of the landlords) were generally not put forward in India so concretely. This obviously is explained by the fact of intensification of nationalistic tendencies along with the growth of national liberation struggle at the early stage of its development. The realization of national contradictions, which were perceived ever more by the progressive elements of the society as irreconcilable predetermined in their own way the realization of social contradictions, particularly their lack of reconciliation. The conditions of the colonial country at the then level of social development also made the more advanced elements of the society put up with ideas of social compromise with the tendency to 'satisfy all' for the sake of national unification against the alien power.

CONTRADICTIONS IN BANKIMCHANDRA

All this found clear expression in the views of Bankimchandra and later of other national leaders of India of the new times and conditioned their extreme contradictoriness. Bankimchandra directly stated that the 'absence of commonness of interest of all classes of people, higher and lower, is now a main obstacle on the path of progress of the country.'<sup>28</sup> And here exposing the landlords' oppression and arbitrariness, rising to the acceptance of injustice of private (namely, landlords') ownership of land, he did at the same time try to prevail upon landlords to have 'fraternal' attitude towards peasants so that they could receive their share in the fruits of the earth which they cultivate with their sweat. The contradictoriness of Bankimchandra's views is visually seen particularly in his following statement: 'He who, despite righteousness because of imperfection of law, inherits wealth and bears the titles of *maharajadhiraj*<sup>29</sup> and the like, and has his autocracy, should remember that the peasant of Bengal Poran Mondal is his countryman and brother. Man is born in this world, ignorant of imperfections (of social order.—author), and is not responsible for them. Poran Mondal also justly has the right to all that wealth which he (*zamindar*.—author) uses alone.'<sup>30</sup>

The tendency of national unification (Bankimchandra even said at one place that, being organized, the *zamindars* can present the interests of the country before the British) with extreme weakness in the conditions of that time of bourgeois-democratic elements, led to the rejection of the ideas of revolutionary social transformation associated with violence. This was characteristic not only of the first Indian enlighteners and later of bourgeois liberal leaders, but also of radical nationalists of the new time, beginning with Bankimchandra himself.<sup>31</sup> He called the great French Revolution and civil war in U.S.A. a 'treatment' of social evil, and Danton and Robespierre 'doctors', but here also stated that 'there was no need for resorting to such cruel treatment everywhere' and that in most of the countries equality had been established



## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND IDEOLOGY OF INDIA

‘on the advice of wise counsellors.’<sup>32</sup> Striving for social transformations, but at the same time rejecting the idea of revolutionary force, Bankimchandra in typical spirit of enlightenment declared: ‘The power of the word is more effective than that of the weapon, enlightenment is more creative than armed struggle.’<sup>33</sup> What sort of magical word, called to solve the growing social contradictions and secure national unity, did Bankimchandra have in mind ?

### TWO SOCIAL POSITIONS

The attempts to find some sort of solution for the problem of social conflicts, conditioned by the decay of feudal and growth of bourgeois relations in India in the late nineteenth century testify to the emergence of two social positions. One of these consisted in idealization of patriarchal relations and associations sanctified by religion, and in particular in idealizing the position of masses before the British conquest. The other was of rejecting such idealization and declaring that the way to freedom from social oppression and solution of social conflicts lay through the sermon of abstractly humanist ideals, dressed in some measure or the other in religious garb.

Tilak’s actions in the 90s can serve as an instance of the former. Raising the same issue, as was done by Bankimchandra, of the significance for the masses (peasants) of the changes taking place in India, but already in the context of the development of heavy industry in Bombay, he, on the one hand, directed it sharply and at once against the British power, and on the other, candidly idealized the position of peasants in medieval Maharashtra. Tilak’s paper *Marhatta* wrote in 1897: ‘The British power makes the helpless peasants throw their favourite fields of work, happy homes and settle down in dirty, stuffy quarters of Bombay. They live there in bad huts, earning their bread with the sweat of their body, and when they return to their village, their earnings are enough only to pay the plunderous land tax. The brave peasants of Maharashtra and

the powerful tribe of landowners of Kankan no longer shine in armies and in navy as they did at the time of the Peshwas.<sup>34</sup> The all-humiliating power of the British has turned those who sometimes formed the base of the power of Maharashtra and Kankan—the famous Deccan cavalry and Kankan navy,—those who were the pride of their country, into simple hired men whose present lot is slavish labour, creating luxury for the all powerful bureaucracy.’<sup>35</sup>

#### TILAK'S VIEWS

Tilak essentially acts here as a social romantic. He already starts speaking in his own way about the ‘bitterness of the proletariat’, anticipating the later speeches of Gandhi and other Indian national leaders. But in the 90s Tilak did not rise above criticism of antagonisms of heavy industry in general, something that was typical of Gandhi. He exposed the consequences of its growth in India just in the context of British dominance on which he placed the responsibility equally both for these consequences as well as for the merciless tax exploitation of Maratha peasants having a semi-feudal character. The criticism of British capital in India accordingly from the positions of social romanticism did not stand in the way of Tilak’s becoming at the same time an ardent champion of national industrial undertaking, and a few years later one of the political leaders of Swadeshi movement, whose immediate aim as declared was the development of national, primarily textile, industry. Tilak’s speeches in 1897 nonetheless reflected the very fact of appearance in India of romantic social views. In the conditions of India of that time such views acquired largely or even exclusively (as in Tilak) a nationalistic, anti-colonial trend. This was first of all an expression of protest against foreign dominance. It is characteristic that the article in the newspaper *Marhatta* cited above incriminated Tilak into legal proceedings started against him by the British powers in 1897 on the charge of ‘inciting a rebellion’.

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### GLORIFICATION OF NATIONAL RELIGION

The idealization of patriarchal antiquity was necessarily accompanied by glorification of national religion. Both these were explained by the closeness of India to medieval period. The dominance of religious consciousness coming from the medieval period and preserved, particularly amongst the masses, could not but be felt in political and social ideas of those taking part in the growing national movement. It was in religion that one started seeking the national banner, expression of national independence and distinctiveness, means of consolidating the nation resurrecting in the face of foreign subjugation, and at the same time means of averting social contradictions, getting more acute with the development of bourgeois relations. However, though the overall national aspirations aroused various social forces, which were taking shape in the then Indian society, glorifying the past and the religion of India, these forces nonetheless had a different approach both to the past and to the religion, thereby bringing to the fore various social aspirations.

The class position of the bourgeois-landlord top hierarchy of Indian society then in the making, now by no means alien to definite general national aspirations, was very clearly noted in the statement, already quoted by us, of Rajnarayan Basu on the past and present of India, and also in his assessments of the role of religion. In his work *Past and Present* (1872-1879) it was stated: 'National thought constitutes the national right of a person. Usually nobody is denied this right. If the British stand by their national religion which is a borrowed one, then have we indeed fallen so low that we deny our own religious thought which originated on the Indian soil?...

'We must switch over to religious reform based on our *shastras*. There is not a single issue of religious or social change for which we would not find in our *shastras* a rational ground or indication. There is not a single rational piece of advice in religious affairs which would be wanting in our sacred books. There is no single good rule or precept of social life which did

not exist in ancient India and which we cannot now publicize in accordance with the spirit of Hinduism. Only by defending the Hindu spirit can we successfully take up the work of religious and social reforms.... Religion is the basis of social structure. Can there really be a hope for progress of a society where religion is not respected? Did not France really face great troubles because of atheism and sinful deeds related thereto? Such troubles crop up where there is no religion.'<sup>36</sup>

The position of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya and a number of other Indian thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was different. Even the rejection of a violent social revolution in Rajnarayan Basu on the one hand, and in Bankimchandra on the other, is far from being the same. In Rajnarayan Basu this rejection is unconditional: revolution is a 'great trouble' which must by all means be averted. In Bankimchandra, revolution is a 'treatment', but, 'too cruel', and hence his tendency to find for India a more mild treatment.

Further different was Bankimchandra's approach to the feudal past and religion. Basically, he rested on the enlightenment tradition of the criticism of medieval structures in India as such, whether under the British or before their arrival on the scene—a tradition going back to Rammohun Roy. Bankimchandra intensified this criticism, developing the elements of conscious democratism inherent in enlightenment. He firmly showed that inequality and social oppression in India go back to remote antiquity. Besides, he believed that here, because of a number of reasons, particularly because of distinctive caste-position system, social oppression had assumed more serious forms than in medieval Europe. 'Nowhere in the world amidst all possible forms of social inequality was there such a ruthless inequality as that manifest in the remote Indian system of *varnas*', he wrote.... 'The inequality between the masters and the slaves in old Europe was not so horrible as that between a Brahmin and a Sudra.'<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, Bankimchandra rejected the romantic idealization of patriarchal

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relations, rejected at a time when one talked directly about the conditions of life of the working people: 'The misfortune of our peasants goes back almost to the same time as that of the origin of civilization in India.'<sup>38</sup>

### BANKIM AND ORTHODOX RELIGION

Bankimchandra opposed the orthodox religion also with the same firmness. While Rammohun Roy in early nineteenth century strove for free rationalistic interpretation of the dogma of Hinduism, and Rajnarayan Basu, the preacher of Hinduist revival, in the 70s digressing from Rammohun Roy's position virtually affirmed in a great measure the infallibility of Hindu Scripture, not to speak of religious reform, Bankimchandra instead took a step forward and raised his hand at the whole task of orthodox religion, and rejected and ridiculed the sermons of revival of Hinduism. 'The learned preceptors (that is, the Brahmins—professional theologists.—author),' says his hero Kamalakanta, 'are seeds of a narcotic. If the poison of hashish does not have its effect on its smoker, he adds two-three seeds of narcotic to it. The Bengali authors, it seems, just on this recipe, rectify their creations with judgements borrowed from learned preceptors. The seeds of narcotic of these judgements, mixed with the hashish of their writings, have an intoxicating effect on the minds of their readers. The entire Bengal is now drunk with this poison.'<sup>39</sup> At another place he said: 'You say that India must be pervaded by the sacred scripture of Vedic religion. And knowledge?—Let its very name rot in India? !... Who will ultimately liberate India from the oppression of religion of *shastras*? Who will rescue her from the hands of the Brahmins, these ruiners of all happiness? Who will give life to Indians?'<sup>40</sup>

Rejecting the idealization of patriarchal antiquity and ideas of revival of Hinduism, Bankimchandra laid primary stress on moralistic sermon as a means of solving social conflicts, and a way to creation of an ideal society. In Bankimchandra this is a sermon of abstract humanism, of the assestion of

humaneness (*manushyatva*). However, the moralistic sermon itself was in him directly linked with religion dressed in religious garb, though also of an abstract character. The humanist ideals were for him religious precepts and the meaning of all religion, its 'eternal source' which he called *dharma*. '*Dharma* is humaneness, love for the people and doing of good, sanctified by devotion (*bhakti*) to God and bringing to man peace and personal happiness. . . . *Dharma* is not in the Veda but in the doing of good to the people. Devotion to God, love for mankind and peace in heart—this is what is *dharma*.'<sup>41</sup> Here Bankimchandra included patriotism too in the concept of *dharma*. Besides, he was prepared to place patriotism above all other manifestations of *dharma*: 'Do not forget that love for the homeland is the highest *dharma*.'<sup>42</sup> Trying to assert the idea of patriotism in his creative work, Bankimchandra used in his poetry the traditional images of Hindu mythology familiar to the people,<sup>43</sup> and in his historical novels idealized the medieval relations, though rather more on an aesthetic than on social level.

The protest against national enslavement and medieval social oppression and also; as a supplement to the emerging democratism, the amalgam of criticism of bourgeois relations with moralistic sermon, constituted the characteristic features of the views of a great number of Indian thinkers and social leaders on the boundary of nineteenth and twentieth centuries and later.

#### RABINDRANATH'S POSITION

The statements of young Rabindranath Tagore can be quoted as an illustration. In the 90s of the nineteenth century he acquainted himself with socialist ideas and published a few short articles and notes on the issue of labour and socialist movement in the West.<sup>44</sup> Well known is his article *Socialism* (1892). This exposition was of a most general character, and the reflections contained in it on the life of the future socialist society were extremely naive. Nonetheless,

Tagore enunciated in his article a number of positions which refuted the bourgeois-liberal ideas of socialist ideal dominant amongst the Indian national leaders of that time; and in this lies their main significance. It was stated there that the liquidation of autocratic power of the king and of the aristocracy in England and the victory of liberalism did not lead to actual liberation of the masses, and conditioned the establishment of the power of capital, 'guaranteeing that capital would not be touched; liberalism thereby served as a bliss only for the rich and deprived the masses of equal rights for happiness and progress'. 'The socialists', continued the author, 'want that production and distribution should be in the hands of the whole society and not (in the hands of) any powerful individuals.' It is significant that Tagore saw the so-called ultimate aim of socialism in the establishment of 'unity and freedom'. The article concluded with the words: 'Socialism tries again to achieve the unity of all peoples by equitable distribution of wealth amongst the members of the society and thus secure the maximum possible freedom for everybody. The goal of socialism is attainment of unity and freedom in human society.'<sup>15</sup> Obviously manifest here in their own way are dreams of national unification and democratic aspirations which were so characteristic for Tagore and other vanguard Indian thinkers of his time.

The article *Socialism* was an exposition of socialist ideas, and Tagore expressed his own attitude to these ideas in one of his letters of 1893: 'I do not know whether the socialist ideal of more equitable distribution of wealth can be achieved, but if not, the will of the providence is indeed ruthless and man is most unfortunate from the creation. For, if in this world poverty is inevitable let there at least remain some ray of opportunity which would awaken the best part of mankind to hope and work tirelessly for mitigating his lot.'<sup>16</sup>

Having sympathies for the socialist ideal, and seeing in it a 'ray of hope', Tagore, specially in those years, believed that the way to the best future was not so much in socialist trans-

formation as in 'transformation of human nature'—moral perfection. 'The sufferings, poverty, the oppression by the strong and the humiliation of the weak...—these are the unbearable misfortunes of India', he noted in 1891. 'But whom shall we fight against? Against the eternal ruthlessness of human nature itself!'<sup>47</sup>

Nonetheless, this first, though still far-removed, familiarity with social ideas had its influence on the outlook of the great Indian poet as well as on the views of other progressive Indians, helping in the awakening and development of democratic consciousness. Forty years later, recalling the days of his youth, the time when the Indians of his generation for the first time learnt of democratic and socialistic ideals, Tagore wrote: 'The calls for smashing the chains of political slavery echoed in our ears. And at the same time, the alarming warning against those who were trying to convert human labour into an object of economic speculation.'<sup>48</sup>

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The growing democratism and along with it the criticism of bourgeois relations combined with religious-moralist preaching were specially perceptibly seen in the views of the well-known Indian thinker, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). His personal destiny was unusual, but reflected in it were some characteristic features of India of that time. Narendranath Datta (such was the secular name of Swami Vivekananda<sup>49</sup>) was born in the family of a highly educated and seemingly rich attorney of Calcutta. His father passed away, leaving behind only debts, when Narendranath was still studying in a college where he displayed extraordinary capabilities. The family was on the verge of poverty, and the young boy had to pass through days of semi-starvation. Still earlier, ideological quests, associated, as was only usual in the India of that time, with questions of religion, had brought Datta to Ramakrishna whose cottage in a temple near Calcutta attracted even some Calcutta intelligentsia. Now he came still closer to Ramakrishna



and later became a sort of his disciple\* and 'renounced the worldly life'. In 1891 he went wandering all over India as a sannyasi (ascetic), adopting the name of Vivekananda. During these wanderings of about two years, he suffered, as he put it, 'the sharpest pain on seeing the monstrous poverty and suffering of the common people'. Apparently, it was then that he conceived his naive plan of turning to the rich countries of the West for material aid to India in exchange, so to say, for her spiritual values. This led to his journey to the U.S.A. which he undertook on modest means provided by an Indian prince. The immediate purpose of his journey was to take part in the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. In his speeches Vivekananda rebuffed the attacks of the missionaries on the beliefs of the Indians and showed that Indian religious-philosophical and ethical conceptions were not inferior to such types of systems existing in Europe and America. His brilliant speeches, imbued with humanist spirit and affirming national dignity of Indians, attracted attention in the West, and in India these were construed as a national success.<sup>50</sup> His stay in the U.S.A. and Europe in 1893-1896 brought a turning point in many of his views, and on returning home he devoted himself to active preaching work. He set up a socio-religious body of its own type with the features of a religious fraternity—the Ramakrishna Mission, which, as per his ideas, was to carry out the work of enlightening the people. In 1899-1900 he once again visited the U.S.A. and Europe.

In the West Vivekananda was known mainly as a religious philosopher, a moralist-preacher, and a yogi. But his interests were not confined simply to religious-philosophical problems, and his work not merely to moralist preaching and popularization of yogic practices. All this coexisted and remained in Vivekananda associated with social and political problems primarily of India herself, which concerned him as a thinker and social leader.

\*[The foremost among his disciples—Publisher.]

SOCIAL-POLITICAL VIEWS OF  
VIVEKANANDA

The social-political views of Vivekananda played an extremely important role in the development of Indian social thought and growth of national liberation movement, and influenced not simply one generation of its participants, specially in Bengal. Vivekananda, with a greater awareness than Bankimchandra, rejected the notions of the British power being a blessing for India. He saw in colonial dominance not only the manifestation of national oppression in general but also a main obstacle in the material and cultural development of India, a cause for the monstrous poverty of the Indian masses. Vivekananda also sensed most acutely the weight of political oppression by colonial powers, as also the need for fighting against it. He wrote: 'A few hundred of modernized and half educated people who have lost their nationality,—this is all that modern British India can boast of, and *nothing more*.... The monstrous hunger, involving millions of lives, has become an inevitable consequence of the British power (there is no starvation in native states).... India could feed five times more people than her present population if everything would not have been taken from the people right at the roots.... Lately the country is being dominated by terror. The British soldiers kill our men and use force on our women—for this they are sent back home on a pension which, like the passage money, is also paid to them at our expense...'<sup>51</sup> 'Freedom is the first prerequisite of growth and development...'<sup>52</sup> 'O India ! Will this shameless cowardice really give you freedom which can be worthy only of a hero ! The demands of the poor will never be satisfied.'<sup>53</sup>

The most important, progressive feature of social-political views of Vivekananda was that he considered national liberation of India and democratic social emancipation of its masses as mutually related and the twofold goal. He regarded the education of the working people as the first step on the way to this goal, called upon the youth to go 'to the people' and try

to work in this direction. It is quite possible that here, as also in some other ideas of Vivekananda, there are in some measure similarity of the ideas of Russian *Narodniks*. He undoubtedly showed interest in Russia and is known to have met P. A. Kropotkin in Paris. Here are a number of Vivekananda's statements on the masses and on the need of awakening them: 'Our aristocratic ancestors went on treading the common masses of our country under foot till they became helpless, till under this torment the poor, poor people nearly forgot that they were human beings... .' 'I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them....'<sup>54</sup> 'The most important thing which I wish once again to remind you about, is the need for practical work, and practical work consists above all in that you must go to the suffering millions of Indians and take them with you.' '...Go to their huts, from door to door, at noon and in the evening, at any time, and open their eyes... . Give them ideas, open their eyes to the world surrounding them, and then they will themselves bring about their salvation... . Your task is to give the masses their rights, and let them defend these... . The only hope of India is from the masses. The upper classes are physically and morally dead.'<sup>55</sup> Although Vivekananda saw the 'only hope' of India in the common people, he considered the middle class the leading force of social movement, obviously having in mind mainly the intelligentsia. He contrasts this middle class to the rich. 'Mention to me any country where the rich persons ever helped anyone. It is the middle classes in all countries who carry out great tasks.... I expect nothing from the rich people of India.'<sup>56</sup>

In his own way Vivekananda already realized the class

character of the position of the propertied classes or, rather, of their top hierarchy, in the work of national liberation. While Bankimchandra still hoped that *zamindars* would also play some positive role in this, Vivekananda clearly had no such expectations. He regarded the national freedom itself not only impossible without political mobilization of the masses but also unthinkable without their social emancipation. Upset, like also Bankimchandra, over political ineffectiveness of liberal leaders in the face of colonial power, he besides, saw in their position a class interest hostile to the working masses. He wrote: 'Our young fools hold meetings to gain more power from the British. They only laugh. He who is not ready to give freedom to others is not worthy of it. Suppose that the British hand over to you all power. What then ? You will use it to hold the people at the low level. Then let this freedom be not there. The slaves thirst for power in order to enslave.'<sup>57</sup>

#### DEMOCRATISM IN VIVEKANANDA

The growing democratism in Vivekananda is combined with an intensification of criticism of the bourgeois society. The Indian thinker now criticized not only the colonial policy of capitalist powers but also their social structure itself—the social inequality and omnipotence of the rich dominant there. He saw in the power of money concrete political power of the exploiters in the bourgeois society, having at its disposal the destinies and lives of common people for the sake of their own avidity.

The process of evolution of his ideas on bourgeois society in the West is interesting. It was a typical reflection of the movement of the nineteenth-century progressive Indian social thought from enlightening idealization of bourgeois society to its subjective criticism. At the time of his first visit to the U.S.A. in 1893 Vivekananda clearly perceived the conditions of life and the manner of living of those circles with whom he came in contact while taking part in the World's Parliament of

Religions. He felt affected by trivial-bourgeois notions of this environment. In the background of the monstrous poverty of the Indian masses, of the Indian life, the western society first appeared to him a society of 'unlimited opportunities for all' and the poverty of that place—'the lot of the lazy and the immobile'.<sup>58</sup> There was really a big difference between the conditions of life in a colonial country where millions of people daily saw the face of death by starvation, and in the developed capitalist countries which had made bourgeois progress, exploiting the colonies. He did not find all these associations revealed at once, and the illusions appeared far more modest and simpler. Nevertheless, in the ultimate end, he did, as he said, come 'to the essence of things'. In all probability, he was helped by his own penetrating sense of a patriot-democrat and by his familiarity with the advanced social thought of the West. Having visited the U.S.A. twice, he had an high appreciation of the energy, hardworking temperament, and democratic spirit of the American masses, of their readiness and capacity to defend their rights; and he was also impressed by their scientific and technological achievements. But, at the same time, he sharply criticized the social structure in the U.S.A. and in the West in general. 'With all the criticism of the westerners against our caste, they have a worse one—that of money. The almighty dollar, as the Americans say, can do anything here', he wrote from Chicago in 1894.<sup>59</sup> Vivekananda was particularly disturbed by racism. He said that the position of the Negroes had hardly improved after the abolition of slavery: 'Their lives are of no value; they are burnt alive on mere pretences. They are shot down without any law for their murderers; for they are niggers, they are not human beings, they are not even animals.'<sup>60</sup> Like the social inequality, Vivekananda compared the racial discrimination in the U.S.A. with the hateful caste system in India. Going through the racial discrimination in America, he wrote: 'America has begun to appear to me somewhat familiar, something like my own country, defiled by castes.'<sup>61</sup>

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA STUDIES IN SOVIET UNION

### EXPOSURE OF BOURGEOIS STRUCTURE BY VIVEKANANDA

Notwithstanding all this, Vivekananda directs the main fire of his criticism against the dominance of the rich whose autocracy the institutions of bourgeois democracy were not able to conceal from him. The force with which he exposed the bourgeois structure and the anti-war trend of his criticism in many ways retains its significance even till this day. 'Those who have money', he said, 'hold the government of the land under their thumb, plunder the people, drink their blood, depute common people to far-off countries to fight, so that in case of victory they may fill their bags with gold obtained with the blood of these simple people. As regards the common people, they are only to shed their blood'. Vivekananda spoke also of the 'class of people who in the name of politics plunder others and go on fattening, sucking the blood of the masses, in all European countries'. of the 'disgusting sight revealed behind the scene where the present-day politicians act, - plunder in mid-day light, the real dance of the devil in man'.

Vivekananda could feel also the growth of antagonisms in the bourgeois society and its impending crisis. 'There never was a time in the world's history when there was so much robbery, and high-handedness, and tyranny of the strong over the weak, as at this latter end of the nineteenth century', he wrote in 1897. He showed great insight while cautioning in 1900 about the imminent military catastrophe—the 'horrible war' in which 'many countries' will take part and which 'will disintegrate very fast'. The whole western world appeared to him as being 'on a volcano which can start erupting, and tomorrow itself this world will fly off into dust'.

### VIVEKANANDA AND LENIN

Despite the criticism of western civilization, Vivekananda understood in his own way the positive significance of what V. I. Lenin called the 'European ideals of enlighteners'. And although, along with a criticism both of feudalism and of bourgeois structure, he did not avoid even a certain idealiza-

tion of some features of each of them, the main conclusion he drew was that neither the feudal orders, becoming a thing of the past, nor the bourgeois relations on the whole now affirming themselves in India could be accepted. This conclusion, for the first time in India distinctly formulated by Vivekananda only, was a main attainment of the progressive Indian social thought before the first world war. 'In a certain sense, materialism came to save India, opening the doors of life for every person and destroying the exclusive privileges of the caste',<sup>66</sup> wrote Vivekananda. 'We fight for establishing political institutions in India which have already been long existing in Europe. These were tested in the course of centuries and have been admitted to be imperfect. Various institutions of political trend were condemned one after the other as not justifying their existence, and now Europe is caught in confusion and does not know what to do. The material tyranny has become truly monstrous. Wealth and power are everywhere concentrated in the hands of the few people who do not work but have at their disposal the labour of the millions. Possessing the power, they can fill the whole world with streams of blood. Religion and generally everything is under their thumb. They are the rulers, they are the top masters. The western world is ruled by a handful of Shylocks. Constitutional rule, freedom, parliament, —all these things you hear about are only a fun. The West groans under the tyranny of Shylocks and the East from the tyranny of the priests...'.<sup>67</sup> There are two great obstacles on our way: The Scylla of old orthodoxy, and the Charybdis of modern European civilization.<sup>68</sup>

#### VIVEKANANDA AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

Vivekananda undoubtedly knew about the ideas of scientific socialism. It is probable that he was the first among the Indians to expound the ideas of systematic change in social formations and to declare that feudalism and capitalism, as also the dominance of the exploiters, would inevitably give way to the power of the Shudras—the working people —viz. to socialism.

In 1899, in an article 'Modern India' he wrote: '...a time will come when there will be the rising of the Shudra class, with their Shudra-hood; that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Shudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaishya or the Kshatriya,<sup>69</sup> but a time will come, when the Shudras of every country, with their inborn Shudra nature and habits—not becoming in essence Vaishya or Kshatriya, but remaining as Shudras—will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to break slowly upon the western world, and the thoughtful are at their wits end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon. Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism, and other like sects are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow.'<sup>70</sup>

Speaking of absolute inevitability of impending power of the working people, that is, of socialism ('it must be—nobody has the power to avert it'<sup>71</sup>), Vivekananda at the same time shared the naive ideas of the nineteenth-century western intelligentsia that socialism, as a result of uniform distribution of material wealth, at its low level, will possibly lead to undermining of culture. In the context of these ideas he who was the first Indian to call himself a 'socialist', wrote: 'I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.'<sup>72</sup>

The familiarity with the socialist movement in the West made it possible for Vivekananda to take a perceptible step forward compared to his predecessors in the understanding of the development of class conflicts in India herself. Already in the 90s of the nineteenth century, he showed that the class struggle of the working people, peculiar only to the modern, that is bourgeois, society had also started developing here. In the totally legitimate strikes of those years he could discern the phenomenon taking shape of the same order as the organized working class movement in the West. As a confirmed democrat, he welcomed these mass actions, seeing in them the awakening of the working people. 'They



have worked so long uniformly like machines guided by human intelligence, and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour;’ said Vivekananda in 1898, ‘in every country this has been the case. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this, determined to exact their legitimate dues. The masses of Europe and America have been the first to awaken and have already begun the fight. Signs of this awakening have shown themselves in India, too, as is evident from the number of strikes among the lower classes nowadays. The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much.’<sup>73</sup>

#### VIVEKANANDA AND THE POWER OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

Sympathizing with the idea of establishment of the power of the working people, and even considering it inevitable in all countries of the world, Vivekananda, like Bankimchandra, regarded socialism only as an extremely remote perspective. Fighting for the awakening of the masses and welcoming its first signs in India, he however, did not any more raise the question of organization of the working people on class basis. He criticized the bourgeois structure precisely from the standpoint of a democrat and a humanist sincerely sympathizing with the working people, and protested against social inequality and oppression, though not comprehending the objective laws conditioning the exploitation and very omnipotence of the rich in a capitalist society. This lack of understanding of the objective laws of bourgeois relations on the one hand and the tendency of securing national unification of Indians on the other led Vivekananda to utopian endeavours to eliminate social and class conflicts without liquidating the material basis of class society.

Extremely important also is the following circumstance acquiring a special vehemence and significance in the conditions of economic dominance of foreign capital. Vivekananda, and also Tilak and a number of other radical nationalists of

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, unlike Bankimchandra and his predecessors but like such enlighteners as Rammohun Roy, saw that the British dominance was obstructing the economic, above all industrial, development of India, condemning it to backwardness. At the same time, following essentially the advanced traditions of enlightenment, they distinctly understood that national revival of India required development in the country of modern industry, science, education, etc. Vivekananda called upon Indians to 'return to the stream of the remaining world', to overcome 'isolation from other nations, the cause of our downfall.'<sup>74</sup>

#### NATIONAL INDUSTRY

On the border of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries one of the most acute economic and political problems in India was the development of national industry. It was precisely here that the objective needs of socio-economic development of the country and the interests of the British capital, obstructing the growth of the emerging national industry, strangling it, came into clash particularly distinctly. Already in the 90s, the leading national organizations and leaders, both liberals as well as the first radical nationalists, started publicizing ever more insistently the idea of industrialization of India, and appealed for safeguard and encouragement of national industrial products—*swadeshi*.<sup>75</sup> But even such thinkers in India as Vivekananda did not at that time virtually have any idea of the growth of national economy, which they so ardently wanted, as different from, or except on, the basis of private capitalist enterprise. Here objectively, and partly also consciously in the manner of enlightenment, they upheld the bourgeois progress far more decisively and consistently than the liberal bourgeoisie associated with foreign capital and feudal vestiges. This showed itself in their aspiration to eliminate political and economic dominance of colonialism which in those conditions meant speeding up development of capitalism in the country. They consciously opposed compradorism with which the extremely

varied strata of emerging Indian bourgeoisie were in a certain measure associated. Like also other vanguard leaders of national movement, Vivekananda called for development of own industry in India. Having in mind big Indian traders-compradors of the Marwari community, he said: 'They have little understanding of their own interests. . . . If the money that they lay out in their business and with which they make only a small percentage of profit were utilised in conducting a few factories and workshops, instead of filling the pockets of Europeans by letting them reap the benefit of most of the transactions, then it would not only conduce to the well-being of the country but bring by far the greater amount of profit to them, as well.'<sup>76</sup> About ten years later, in 1907, the leader of the Bengali radical nationalists, Bipin Chandra Pal, who in many ways followed the ideas of Vivekananda, said that with the establishment of national political power, 'every inch of textile from Manchester and every blade of knife from Leeds' would be subject to 'heavy prohibitive protectional tariff' and that the British capitalists would not have 'any rights to take the mineral wealth of the country and export it to their islands.'<sup>77</sup>

#### AWAKENING OF THE WORKING CLASS

Defending objectively nothing else but accelerated development of capitalism, Swami Vivekananda, more than anyone else in India, realized the growth of social contradictions conditioned by this development. As a democrat, he sincerely desired the awakening of the working masses, their social emancipation. Besides, he in his own way understood that the growth of bourgeois relations was conducive to this awakening, and believed that it would, in the ultimate end, lead to the establishment of the power of the working people—viz. to socialism. At the same time, as a nationalist, he strove to remove social conflicts, and to achieve some compromise between the exploiters and the exploited and thereby to secure national unity. It is interesting that in some of his statements some sort

of an idea of transientness, relativity of this task seems to slip past. 'In the next fifty years we must have only one slogan—"our great Mother-India",—and let all other deities go away from our consciousness during this time.'<sup>78</sup> All this gave rise to profound, truly pressing contradictions which showed themselves in his quests for a social ideal.

Rising against feudal oppression, Vivekananda at the same time, from the very beginning, tried to find the ideal of social organization in the institutes of ancient India, particularly in the caste system. He presumed to bring out some reform in them or, as he expressed himself, lead them to the 'logical end'.<sup>79</sup> Categorically rejecting castes on the basis of birth, as embodying social injustice, he put forward the idea of organization of peoples in castes according to their capacities and 'services to society', what he called 'caste on merits'. However, this idea was in Vivekananda the only, so to say, 'concrete' project of the new social organization on the basis of ancient Indian social institutions which he himself soon denounced. The democratism inherent in the thinker demolished his own social formulation representing, as it were, a bourgeois variety of medieval caste system. 'The conviction is daily gaining on my mind', he wrote in 1897, 'that the idea of caste is the greatest dividing factor and the root of *maya*<sup>80</sup>; all caste either on the principle of birth or of merit is bondage. Some friends advise, 'True, lay all that at heart, but outside, in the world of relative experience, distinctions like caste must needs be maintained. . . . The idea of oneness at heart (with a craven impotence of effort, that is to say), and outside, the hell-dance of demons—oppression and persecution—ay, the dealer of death to the poor, but if the Pariah be wealthy enough, 'Oh, he is the protector of religion !''.<sup>81</sup>

#### HUMANIST IDEALS OF VIVEKANANDA

What remained ? It was the same sermon of abstract-humanist ideals which was given already by Bankimchandra. But in Vivekananda this moralistic sermon acquires a great

social-political trend, as a completely conscious attempt, on the one hand, to make the propertied ('upper') classes yield concessions to the working people ('lower classes'), and, on the other, to restrict within definite limits further development of class struggle of the working people. Welcoming the awakening, now set in, of the working people, the first signs of which appeared in India, speaking of the impossibility of stopping this process, he, however, clearly does not want that matters reach revolutionary struggle. He would have liked the oppressed to be liberated without it so that the 'upper and the lower' should somehow solve matters peacefully. Here, while Bankimchandra simply appealed to the conscience and patriotism of the propertied classes, Vivekananda introduced also a new element—a threat of its own kind. He cautions: 'The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights.'<sup>82</sup>

The power, seemingly capable of 'recultivating' the propertied classes, of putting a curb on their exploiting and oppressing tendencies and at the same time restricting the class struggle of the working people, in other words capable of securing social compromise and national unification, was seen by Vivekananda in moralistic religion. Acquiring a great social trend, his moralistic message was, in a greater measure than, say, in Bankimchandra, filled with religious content. He, more consciously than many other Indian nationalists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sought in religion not only a national banner in general, not only the means of unification of various peoples inhabiting India,<sup>83</sup> but above all a weapon of social compromise and of creation of an ideal society, remaining a class society, but free from exploitation, and, more correctly (or according to the concept of Vivekananda himself) precisely from oppression. Such kind of views, inherent in the various so-called 'religious versions' of socialism, seemed in India rather a nationalistic utopia. Created largely by Vivekananda, it most fully expressed the social aspirations of radical nationalists of that period (with varying degrees of

individual realization of these aspirations by them), and appeared in some measure or the other in the views of many leaders of Indian national liberation movement even later.

#### RELIGIOUS VIEWS OF VIVEKANANDA

Vivekananda's religious views reflected the tendency peculiar to capitalism of filling the religious ideology with the norms of morality which the bourgeois ideologists call universally human. Of such ethical norms some reflect class interests of the exploiters (particularly, the acceptance of private property as sacred), and others are positive norms of human relations. The ideology of the dominant classes, particularly religious, uses even these 'simple' ethical norms, particularly for the support of their authority, though the exploiters themselves violate these every day. But at the same time the working masses strive for affirming the positive norms of human mutual relations. In the conditions of dominance of religious consciousness these aspirations, reflecting in their own way the struggle of the working masses against oppression and exploitation, also partly acquired religious forms.

In India this tendency manifested itself already in the views of the earliest enlighteners, for instance, Rammohun Roy. But in Vivekananda and some other Indian thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the idealized notions of religious morality as a morality universally human were contrasted already *not only* to the morals of the dominant classes of a feudal society, justifying the caste-position, inequality, and the power of the feudal,<sup>84</sup> but also the inhuman moral of ready money and money-grabbing inherent in bourgeois society itself, which justified social inequality based on private property. Being incapable, because of its social-historical constraints, of actually rising against the first cause of evil, viz. private property, Vivekananda attacked its consequences, which he wanted to fight against by means of moralistic sermon, using a number of traditional positions of Indian religious-philosophical thought. Accordingly, religion is in him

a theory and practice of its own kind of moral perfection. If he regarded the concept 'attainment of God' or 'religious realization' ('realization of God') as the essence and meaning of religion,<sup>85</sup> then moral perfection precisely was virtually the main content of the very concept of 'realization'. In this context Vivekananda interpreted the positions of Hindu religious-philosophical system of Vedanta, stating that it revealed the secret of 'selfless work'.

#### VIVEKANANDA AND VEDANTA

As the starting-point, Vivekananda took the positions of Vedanta about the top hierarchy of Brahmins (divine essence) and of soul as manifestation of *Brahman* in man. According to these positions, the divine soul in its nature possesses an initial purity which, however, is destroyed under the influence of *prakriti* (material world). The original purity of the soul can be restored, if a man renounces the material world—the worldly activity, passion and ties, that is, leads a monastic form of life. The renunciation thus creates conditions for the confluence of soul with *Brahman*. Vivekananda gave to these positions such interpretation that in the ultimate count served as the foundation of his social ideas. The concepts of divine nature of soul and of restoration of its original purity were used by him for showing the very possibility of moral perfection, and the concept of confluence of soul with *Brahman* ('realization') was treated as an attainment of this goal in the spirit of the formula: 'The divine kingdom is within us.' 'Every soul', he said, 'is divine in its potential. The aim is to reveal this divine source within us, controlling both inner and outer nature.'<sup>86</sup> Although, developing the ideas of moral perfection as realization of 'divine source' in man and of confluence of soul with *Brahman*, Vivekananda gave the yogic practice ('control of inner nature')<sup>87</sup> its due (and this in no small measure), his main stress all the same was on the concept of 'renunciation' ('control of outer nature'). This concept was also interpreted by him quite differently from the traditional

medieval interpretation. Renunciation was treated by him not as a denial of or isolation from day-to-day work—labour—but as a denial of self-interest in this work and devoting it to the common well-being. The thinker regarded such routine but selfless work of the householder (*grihasta*), concerned over his home (family) and over those who may need his care, as the highest virtue and the most important way of 'attaining' God (*karma-yoga*). This was the main theme in all his religious-moralistic sermon. He said: '*Karma-yoga* means: "Work unceasingly, but refuse to have any attachment to work. Let your soul remain free. . . . Do not bring in egoism into it: I. . . . My. . . ."'<sup>88</sup>

The position about the householder, selflessly working and naturally fulfilling his duty of care for the near ones, obviously reflected the traditional notions of the peasant community about work and virtue. Vivekananda revealed these aspirations and dreams in precise religious-philosophical garb and at the same time introduced into these something from contemporary trivial, bourgeois notions. The latter are particularly felt in some of his lectures meant for the American audience. But the pre-eminent mood, the pathos of his sermon of selfless work and concern for the near ones was a call for working for the welfare of the country and for the well-being of the poor—this, using the expression of F. Engels, is 'turning to the poor as to select deities'. It was embodied in Vivekananda's famous formula of 'impoverished God' (*'Daridra Narayana'*), which later became one of the symbols of faith in the doctrine of M. K. Gandhi. 'The only God who exists, the only God in whom I believe. . . . my God', said Vivekananda, 'are the unfortunate ones, the poor of all nations !'<sup>89</sup>

#### AUROBINDO GHOSH

Thus, Vivekananda wanted to find in religion a power which supposedly could replace the bourgeois ready money in relations between people by love for the near ones, or, as it is often stated, by selflessness and spirituality. And this had



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to avert oppression and social contradictions, and secure national unity. If moral perfection was called a 'realization' of God in an individual, 'nationalism'—national unification—was the realization of the same divine source in a nation. Aurobindo Ghosh, following Vivekananda's interpretation of positions of Vedanta, wrote in 1908: 'The supreme teaching, the basic spirit of Hinduism...sees the one invariable and indivisible Divinity in every individual being. Nationalism is simply the ardent aspiration for the realization of the Divine Unity in the nation, a unity in which all the component individuals, however various and apparently unequal their functions as political, social or economic factors, are yet really and fundamentally one and equal.'<sup>90</sup>

Of no less significance in the moralistic interpretation of religion in Vivekananda and other radical nationalists was also the fact that they tried to assert self-sacrifice for the sake of common well-being, that is, above all for the sake of the work of national liberation. The struggle for national freedom was seen by him as a divine commandment and manifestation of ineradicable divine source. 'Nationalism cannot die', said Aurobindo Ghosh, 'because it is God who is working in Bengal. God cannot be killed, God cannot be sent to jail.'<sup>91</sup>

### VIVEKANANDA'S STRESS ON RELIGION

Making much of religion (that is, moralistic sermon revealed in religious garb) as the main power, supposedly capable of averting oppression and social contradictions, Vivekananda and other Indian thinkers having analogous positions, saw that in the West religion by no means fulfilled such role and that the influence thereof religious ideology itself was on the decline. But they did not wish (partly could not) to regard this objective fact as an inevitable consequence of historical development and considered it inherent exclusively in the 'materialistic West'. And just the same dominance of religious consciousness, medieval in its character, particularly amongst

the masses of India and other backward countries, was treated by them as some special religiosity—'spirituality'—inherent just in the East. Besides, a similar position existed also in the West in the medieval period, and now it has already started becoming a matter of the past also in the East. Proceeding from the fact that India still retained the dominance of religious consciousness typical of the medieval times, but treating this phenomenon quite unhistorically, Vivekananda, like many others in his time, declared India a peculiar 'country of religion', different thereby from the West. '...Above all, India is the land of religion...', he wrote. 'In religion lies the vitality of India...' <sup>92</sup>

Turning to religion sharply deepened the contradictoriness of Vivekananda's Social position. To the contradictions which were inherent already in Bankimchandra (protest against oppression, along with the endeavours to reconcile the oppressors and the oppressed), Vivekananda added some more. The criticism of the medieval period and of semi-feudal social oppression, including that of orthodox religion, was combined in him with assertions that India has inherent in her, from times of yore, particularly noble ethical norms and 'Social regulations' which guard against oppression and are sanctified by religion. There was, on the one hand, confusion because of centuries-old exploitation and oppression of the working people by 'lower' aristocratic ancestors, and, on the other, assertions of the following type: 'In Europe, it is everywhere Victory to the strong and death to the weak. In the land of Bharata (the ancient name of India—author) every social rule is for the protection of the weak.' <sup>93</sup> On the one hand, there is a call for the awakening and enlightenment of the masses, and on the other, a tendency to restrict and avert the development of class struggle by preserving religiosity in the masses, which generates humiliation and shame. Rising against this humiliation of the working people, medieval in nature, and fighting for their awakening, Vivekananda at the same time firmly reiterated that the enlightenment of the

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people must be combined with propagation of 'indirect truths of religion'. 'Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion. . ."', he wrote. 'Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.'<sup>94</sup>

It is extremely important that Vivekananda already foresaw the 'flooding' of India with socialistic ideas and wanted to link these to religious-moralistic sermon, and thereby to avert the breaking away of class struggle. The democratic social emancipation of masses and creation of a modern society, but without the antagonisms and class struggle inherent in it—this main position of his nationalistic utopia was formulated by him like this: 'Create European society with the religion of India.'<sup>95</sup>

## SWAMI RAMTIRTHA

From the time of Vivekananda the moralistic interpretation of social ideal combined with the ideas of the special role of Indian 'spirituality'—religion—became one of the substantial features of nationalism in India. After him, Bipin Chandra Pal in 1907 appealed for 'idealizing and spiritualizing concrete content and real relations of life',<sup>96</sup> seeing in this the main way of solving social problems. For an example of the spread of Vivekananda's influence far beyond the frontiers of Bengal, one may refer to the views of his contemporary, Swami Ramtirtha (1873-1906) from Punjab. Familiarizing himself with the teachings of this thinker from Bengal, he left his assignment of teaching mathematics in one of the colleges of Lahore and took up Hindu monastic order and became a preacher. Soon Swami Ramtirtha won popularity particularly amongst the student youth in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. Along with the calls for assertion of national independence and equality, for enlightenment of masses, his preaching contained a moralistic criticism of modern civilization, true, more abstract than in Vivekananda. Here, Ramtirtha too, though more directly and more naively, than him, tried to

apply the positions of Vedanta about monasticism (*sannyasa*) and renunciation to modern social reality. He treated renunciation as a denial not only of self-interest, but also of one's property what Vedanta demanded of a *sannyasi*. Proceeding from the position of Vedanta about divine essence—*Brahman*—being the only reality, and about falsehood, illusoriness of the visible, material world, Swami Ramtirtha put forward his stand about 'divine right' as the only real right and about the falsehood of personal, that is, private rights. This was a negation of private property, though expressed in Hinduist religious-philosophical concepts and having an extremely speculative character. He wrote: 'Shylockian stress on personal rights—"this is mine"—is a sense of ownership, and notions of legitimacy of the latter conflict with the real Law, according to which the only right is the divine right, and everything else is false. Even if nobody accepts this principle, a *sannyasi* must embody it in his life.'<sup>97</sup>

#### NEGATION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

Concluding from the system of Vedanta the negation of private property, Swami Ramtirtha stated the akinness of Vedanta and socialism and showed that the ancient Indian *sannyasis* had achieved 'the socialistic ideal. He even called his teaching 'Vedantic socialism'. At the same time, interpreting in his own way the Vedantic ideal of monasticism as an assertion of independence of an individual in contrast to the community and other patriarchal social connections, Swami Ramtirtha also said that he would have preferred the name 'individualism'. 'The word "socialism" brings to fore the idea of power of society, but Ramtirtha says that the real spirit of Truth consists in asserting the supremacy of the individual in contrast to the whole world, the whole universe.'<sup>98</sup> The protest against medieval humiliation of the individual and assertion of his independent significance, growing in the conditions of that time into bourgeois individualism, was surprisingly intertwined with the protest against bourgeoisness itself,

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against the spirit of constraint suppressing the individual when all this was expressed in traditional Hinduist religious-philosophical concepts. This is how the preservation of religious thought, helped by nationalistic approach, manifested itself.

### INDIA'S HISTORICAL MISSION

Seeing the Indian distinctiveness in religiosity, the nationalists frequently attributed to India a special historical mission—carrying to the world the saving spirituality. Vivekananda here expressed even utilitarian considerations of their own kind, putting forward the idea of exchange of spiritual value of India for scientific-technological attainments of the West. The speeches of Vivekananda, and later of Ramtirtha and other preachers of neo-Hinduism in Europe and the U.S.A. were associated with such ideas. The modernized, emphatic moralistic interpretation of Hinduist religious philosophy given by them was usually perceived there without regard to Indian social and political reality, and the preachers of neo-Hinduism, amongst whom Vivekananda was the most popular in the West, were presented as bearers of mystic 'light from the East', showing the path to salvation of mankind. Nonetheless, if the appearance and development of neo-Hinduist conceptions in India had a fully specific social-political reality, the attraction for things of such type in the circle of western intelligentsia was in its own way conditioned by the social-political environment shaping thereon the border of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here, along with vast differences of social-political conditions in the West and the East there now emerged and started playing a great role that common thing which V. I. Lenin called 'universal capitalist civilization', and whose current had begun to involve afresh hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in the East.<sup>99</sup> The neo-Hinduist conceptions were associated with the growth of democratic national movement and appearance of anti-capitalist views as a supplement to its ideology, formed in the conditions of transition from feudalism to capitalism in colonial India.

The interest in the West in such conceptions, in some measure or the other containing a criticism of bourgeois civilization, was, in the ultimate count, evoked by the environment of deepening general crisis of capitalism. One of the additional manifestations of this was the religious or spiritual quest, characteristic of many representatives of middle strata in the West. Remaining as a rule within the confines of bourgeois ideology, they made an extremely sharp moralistic criticism of capitalism, which reflected the growing contradictions of the bourgeois society.<sup>100</sup> The moralistic protest against the evil of bourgeoisness and simultaneously the hopes for overcoming social contradictions without class struggle, by way of moral perfection as peculiar to a number of Indian thinkers—all this, presented in a mystic garb of ancient oriental philosophy, gave material for spiritual quests in the West. In its turn this current in the West with its passionate-moralistic criticism of modern civilization found a response in such thinkers and leaders of Indian national movement as Vivekananda, Gandhi, and others and influenced their outlook.

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The social views of Vivekananda and other radical nationalists of the late nineteenth century meant a step forward in comparison with liberal-enlightening ideas of social development inasmuch as these revealed a definite understanding of vices and contradictions of bourgeois society. The criticism of capitalism conditioned by this, despite its still purely subjective, 'sentimental' character, played a progressive role, for it helped in the growth of national liberation tendencies, and was the symptom of the growing democratic upsurge in India and expressed it in its own way. This criticism heralded also the beginning of the anti-capitalist tradition of advanced Indian social thought.

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### OBJECTIVE LAWS OF CAPITALISM

However, realizing the vices and contradictions of the bourgeois society, Vivekananda and other Indian thinkers of that time were still very far from a knowledge of objective laws of capitalism, conditioning exploitation and oppression. In Russia of the second half of the nineteenth century, with a higher level of development of pre-Marxist social thought, essentially such a contradiction gave birth to the dream of 'forewarning' capitalism already as an economic system, and conditioned the attempts to counter it with a definite alternative, although only utopian, as was characteristic of the Russian *Narodniks*.

But Vivekananda and other Indian thinkers, criticizing the bourgeois society, still could not counter capitalism even by such a utopian alternative. They saw positive perspective of economic development of India first of all in the creation of national heavy industry, and they could not imagine how to achieve it differently, on the basis of private capitalist enterprise. However, they also already strove to 'forewarn' if not capitalism itself as an economic system then at least the contradictions inherent in it, and dreamt of averting exploitation and oppression of the working people in bourgeois society.

The dreams of this kind led Vivekananda and a number of other Indian thinkers, like the Russian *Narodniks* in their time, to idealization of definite social institutions and notions inherited from the medieval times. To these was ascribed the role of protection against oppression and exploitation. In their existence was seen the distinctiveness of the country, as though creating the possibility of a special path of its development, and the inevitability of their decay with assertion of capitalism was ignored, at that time still unconsciously. The *Narodniks* saw Russian distinctiveness first of all in community, and, rejecting capitalism as an economic system, contrasted it with 'community production', 'domestic industry', 'artel source', etc. But Vivekananda and the thinkers close to him in India found Indian distinctiveness not so much in concrete social

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economic institutions of medieval times as, and even mainly, in general world outlook, specially in dominance of medieval religious consciousness, in what they called Indian 'spirituality'. But this difference between Russian *Narodniks* and first Indian radical nationalists was in itself not already so substantial as, so to say, temporary. The approach of the Indian thinkers characterized above was, obviously in a great measure, explained by the fact that in their consciousness, and above all in their views on economic development, there dominated the source of enlightenment. This was determined by the then level of development of social thought in India. But this was only a question of time and, as it turned out, not for long.

### REVIVAL OF VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

Already by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, when the country was swept by the first wave of fairly large strikes linked with the growth of national-liberation movement of the years 1905-1908 and influencing the social-political life, when the Indians, somewhat more widely than before, familiarized themselves with socialistic movement in the West there started coming suggestions for utopian plans of social economic organization, subjectively-alternative to capitalism, which remind us of the plans of *Narodniks*. Underlying these plans were ideas of revival and use of specific medieval institutes. These were plans of revival of village community, and preferably or even exclusively, of development of small industries, including in some measure or the other the idea of collective control of economy by peasants and craftsmen, and envisaging, as a rule, the use of caste system. The latter in its some initial form was declared as the best form of social division of labour and the ideal of social organization. Such types of plans, marked in each case by individual characteristics, were offered also in the end of the first decade of the twentieth century and later by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Bipin Chandra Pal, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Pramathānath Bose, etc.



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### GANDHI AND HEAVY INDUSTRIES

Here Gandhi laid special stress on criticism of heavy industry which, in the beginning, he simply rejected. In this, in particular, there was the great influence of the views of Leo Tolstoy. The criticism of heavy industry (but usually not such unconditional rejection of it) was characteristic also of other Indian thinkers who, like Gandhi, strove to 'warn' capitalism in India.

The utopian plans of social-economic organization put forward by Indian thinkers from the first decade of the twentieth century, in a greater or lesser measure, invariably, combined with the conception about special saving aim of Indian 'spirituality', with religious-moralistic sermon. Inherited, in other words, were ideas which became prevalent in India back in the nineteenth century and continued to play a substantial role thereafter.

### NATIONALISTIC UTOPIA

Thus, the origin of mass national liberation movement and the already started democratic upsurge led to the emergence of a peculiar radically-nationalistic utopia. It is found that even in this, in particular, there was manifest in its own way what V. I. Lenin called the dream of 'destroying hired slavery without class struggle'.<sup>101</sup> Lenin had in view the petty bourgeois, *Narodnik* [populist] utopia in Russia. He contrasted to it the bourgeois-liberal utopia. The latter 'consists in the fact that it were, as though, possible to have some sort of serious improvements in Russia, in her political freedom, in the position of the working masses, with peace and harmony, without offending anybody, without ruthless and complete-to-the-end class struggle'.<sup>102</sup>

The reference here is to liberal dream of freedom from Czarism with 'peace and harmony', that is, of resolving the 'immediate, direct, pressing problem which the question of political freedom now is'.<sup>103</sup> The ideas of V. I. Lenin about

*Narodnik* and liberal utopias in Russia help to characterize, of course with due regard to local conditions, the liberal-enlightening and radically-nationalistic utopias in India of the period surveyed—utopias also contrasting with one another. The position of the Indian national-liberal leaders was nothing but the dream of 'peace and harmony' without massive and complete-to-the-end liberation struggle, that is, without liquidation of British power, to assert the national political rights of the Indians (self-rule) and have some sort of concrete improvements in the country.

The utopia of radical nationalists consisted in as though, having destroyed the British colonial dominance (by armed force or as a result of non-violent mass actions), it was possible to overcome social contradictions in the Indian society itself, to 'warn' capitalism, to create a society free from exploitation, without class struggle—'in peace and harmony, without offending anyone', with the help of religious-moralistic preaching, by restoring some medieval institutes (community, caste organization), through 'pardon' etc.

Being petty bourgeois in its social original-source, this utopia also assumed a special character determined by the conditions of national-colonial oppression. It reflected on the one hand the unpreparedness of the masses for active conscious struggle for social emancipation, when their democratic consciousness had only just begun to be awakened, and the beliefs, traditions and customs formed in the course of centuries were still very strong, and on the other, the legitimate aspiration of the people for national unification in the face of alien enslaver. This tendency could be used and was actually used by the top hierarchy of the propertied classes, including the feudal elements, in their class interests. This is how various types of anti-democratic nationalistic conceptions, bourgeois-landlordish in their social source—also utopias—emerged to the fore. These rejected or obscured the democratic ideas of enlightenment of working people and the need for mass political action, moving to the first place the negation precisely of

class struggle, castrating the democratic content of criticism of bourgeois society, and letting it get dissolved into scholastic judgements on Indian 'spirituality' and distinctiveness in conformist idealization of the medieval period and its survivals in modern reality.

At the same time, along with the growth of national movement and democratic consciousness of the masses, there occurred further development of radically-nationalistic views which, preserving in some measure or the other their nationalistic and utopian character, already to a great extent, became democratic. Emerging on the boundary of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the radically-nationalistic utopia remained 'the ally' (Lenin) of massive national liberation movement throughout its way. The liberal utopia also in India, to use the words of Lenin, 'made the masses unlearn to fight' while the radically-nationalistic utopia, filled ever more with democratic content, expressed their urge to fight, their dream about better future, promised them, after the victory in national liberation struggle, 'millions of good things', though 'this victory actually would give only a hundred good things'.<sup>104</sup> 'But is it not really natural,' wrote V. I. Lenin, 'that the millions going for a fight, living for centuries in unheard-of darkness, want, poverty, dirt, desolation, obscurity, exaggerate ten times the fruits of possible victory.'<sup>105</sup> Extremely important is also another statement of V. I. Lenin: 'When the question of economic freedom becomes for Russia as much immediate, direct and *acutely pressing* problem as the question of political liberation presently is, the utopia of the *Narodniks* will become *no less* harmful than the utopia of the liberals.'<sup>106</sup>

After the national liberation the country faced and is facing solution of a whole series of general democratic tasks—consolidating the independence gained, raising the national economy, liquidating fully the feudal vestiges.

There emerge also new tasks of democratic and at the same time already anti-capitalist character—liquidation of economic power and political influence of the growing mono-

polistic capital, striving to consolidate around itself the reactionary elements of various trends.

In these conditions, the national-democratic social conceptions having features akin to those of *Narodniks* continue to exist and play a definite progressive role.

The use and development of democratic, anti-capitalist trend of radical-nationalist views formed in the course of national-liberation movement, and simultaneously decisive removal of their class-historical limitations, are an extremely important aspect of social progress.

#### NOTES

1. V. I. Lenin, *Demokratiya i narodnichestvo v Kitae* [Democracy and Populism in China],—*Complete Works* [in Russian], vol. 21, p. 403.
2. V. I. Lenin, *Ot kakogo nasledstva my otkazываемsya ?* [What Heritage Do We Reject?],—*Complete Works* [in Russian], vol. 2, p. 531.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 518.
4. *Ibid.* These characteristics are fully applicable also to the views of Rammohun Roy and other Indian enlighteners of the 19th century.
5. Rammohun Roy, for instance, called the English 'a blessed nation', which 'enjoys civil and political freedom' (Rajah R. Roy, *The English Works*, vol. 1, Allahabad, 1906, p. 470). It is true, later we find in him a note of disappointment, and he criticized the English ruling circles from democratic positions, but this did not substantially change the general approach.
6. The national organizations of the nineteenth century, criticizing colonial structures, and still very far removed from the masses, turned not so much to the people of India herself, as to the social opinion in England. The image of thoughts of the liberal leaders of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is visually shown by the following statement of one of the eminent national leaders of India of that time, Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917). He wrote in 1897: 'My wish and aim consist not in encouraging the uprising, but in averting it and make the relationship between England and India useful and creative for both the countries, which this relationship undoubtedly can be, but, unfortunately, it is no longer possible because of bad and unjust system of rule, stubbornly maintained by the executive power despite the wishes of the crown, people and parliament of England to rule justly' (quoted from: R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, Delhi, 1960, p. 137).
7. *East India (Advisory and Legislative Councils) Replies of the Local Government etc.*, vol. 2, pt. II, London, 1908, H.M.S.O., p. 187.
8. Narahari Kaviraj, *Svadhinatar Sangrame Bangla* [Bengal in the Movement for Independence], Calcutta, 1960, p. 159.

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9. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, *Kamalakanta* (quoted from Russian version, M., 1963, pp. 109-10).
10. It is important that for Rajnarayan Basu, the 'past' is not at all the remote antiquity but the first decades of the 19th century when Bengal was already under British power. It is separated from the 'present' by one generation or a little more. This is a further evidence of extremely perceptible break in social relations started in the second half of the 19th century.
11. Rajnarayan Basu, *Sekal ar ekal* [Past and Present], Calcutta, B.S. 1358, pp. 80, 88-9, 82.
12. Tilak calls England the 'Marwari Island in Europe', and in the present case, has in mind those Englishmen who set off for the East, impelled by a desire for gain.
13. Quoted from: *Times of India*, Overland weekly edition, 10 September 1897.
14. *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India (Collected from Bombay Government Records)*, vol. II, Bombay, 1958, pp. 962-63.
15. S. Sastri, *Men I Have Seen*, Calcutta, 1948, p. 62.
16. *Memoirs of Ramakrishna*, Calcutta, 1957, p. 36.
17. Later the things reached such an extent that when some visitor placed coins in his hands, Ramakrishna lost consciousness and did not regain it until the money was not picked up (S. Sastri, *Men I Have Seen*, p. 63).
18. About Ramalingaswami see the article by A. M. Pyatigorsky in *Ideologicheskie techeniya sovremennoi Indii* [Ideological Current of Modern India], M., 1965, pp. 161-73.
19. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, Bangadesher Krishak [The Peasant of Bengal],—*Bankim Rachanavali* [Works], vol. 2, Calcutta, S.C. 1381, pp. 288-89. ~
20. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
21. The Indian scholar B. Majumdar informs that the Indians knew socialistic ideas even before the publication of Bankimchandra's work 'Equality'. The socialist theories were studied for Master's degree course in History in Calcutta University. A question paper for M.A. (History) in 1870 had a question: 'What is the aim of Communism? Set forth the system of Fourier and Saint-Simon.' Besides, B. Majumdar observes that Marx's *Capital* had still not been translated into English when Bankimchandra wrote 'Equality' (B. Majumdar, *History of Political Thought*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1934, p. 450).
22. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, *Samya* (Equality),—*Bankim Rachanavali* (Works), vol. 2, p. 378. Bankimchandra also opposed the right of inheritance of wealth. He said that 'in no country of the world', including India, was there 'fair inheritance'. 'The right (to wealth.—author) belongs to one who produced it, and not to the son. If justly the son does not need for his maintenance all the property inherited, he does not also have the right to it. This right belongs alike to all members of society.' (*ibid.*, p. 388.)
23. *Ibid.*, p. 389.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 406.

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25. *Ibid.*, p. 388.
26. These views of Tilak are not specially examined in the works on his life and career known to us, including those published lately. At best there is only a reference to them.
27. A. C. Das, *The Indian Ryot, Land Tax, Permanent Settlement and the Famine, Hourah*, 1881.
28. Quoted from: H. N. Dasgupta, *The Indian National Congress*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1946, p. 38.
29. The upper Indian feudal title.
30. Bankimchandra, *Samya*, p. 389.
31. The individual statements in favour of just the social (and not only national) violent revolution in India in the new times date from the 70s of the nineteenth century (Akshaya Chandra Sarkar) and, apparently, proceeded from the same small circle of leaders who favoured the liquidation of landlord's right to land. However, so far as known, this emerging tendency did not find further development in the 19th and early 20th centuries.
32. Bankimchandra, *Samya*, p. 382.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
34. The rulers of Maharashtra in 17th-18th centuries.
35. Quoted from: *Times of India*, Overland weekly edition, 10 September 1897.
36. Rajnarayan Basu, *Sekal ar ekal*, pp. 75-6, 92.
37. Bankimchandra, *Samya*, pp. 282-83.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
39. Bankimchandra, *Kamalakanta*, pp. 94-5.
40. Bankimchandra, *Samya*, p. 383.
41. Bankimchandra, *Dharmatattva: Dharma evam Sahitya* [Essence of Religion: Religion and Literature],—*Bankim Rachanavali* [Works], vol. 2, p. 589.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 671.
43. In his famous song 'Bande Mataram' (I Greet You, Mother!), which in the early 20th century became the hymn of national-liberation movement, the motherland is both Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and beauty, as well as Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, and what is important is that this is also Durga (specially worshipped in Bengal), gifting the world abundance and fertility, but striking a terror to the enemies. The leader of Bengali radical nationalists Bipin Chandra Pal wrote about the image of the motherland created by Bankimchandra: 'This wonderful remanifestation of old gods and goddesses carries the message of new nationalism to the mass of peoples of the country' (quoted from: L. Ray, *Young India*, London, 1917, p. 123).
44. See: H. Mukherjee, *Himself a True Poem: A Study of Rabindranath Tagore*, Delhi, 1961, p. 118.
45. 'Sadhana', 1892, pp. 89-91.
46. R. Tagore, *Bengal* (quoted from Russian version: *Works*), vol. 12, M., 1965, p. 133.
47. R. Tagore, *Nutan o Puratan* [New and Old],—*Rabindra-rachanavali*, vol. 11, Visva Bharati, B.S. 1358, p. 472.

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48. R. Tagore, *Kalantar* [Change of Time],—quoted from Russian version: *Works*, vols. 10, 11, M., 1965, p. 133.
49. *Swami* is the title of its own kind of a monk.
50. His wonderful success as a remarkable orator and defender of religion of his people,—wrote Bipin Chandra Pal,—had an immediate, warm response in India, inspiring the national consciousness shaping in us and giving it new strength (B. C. Pal, *Memoirs of My Life and Times*, vol. 2, Calcutta, 1950, pp. 274-75).
51. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, 1922-1951. (Hereafter: CWV).
52. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 292; vol. 3, p. 483.
53. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 248.
54. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 191, 433; vol. 5, pp. 81, 151-52.
55. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 81, 151-52.
56. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 386.
57. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 313.
58. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 86.
59. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 307.
60. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 214.
61. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 302.
62. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 364.
63. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 138-39.
64. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 371.
65. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 277.
66. It is quite obvious that, speaking of caste privileges, Vivekananda had in view feudal positional privileges in general.
67. Speaking of the 'tyranny of the priests', or of the 'orthodoxy', Vivekananda usually had in mind not only medieval spiritual oppression but also the entire system of feudal relations, sanctified by orthodox religion.
68. CWV, vol. 7, pp. 146-47.
69. Vivekananda uses the names of caste positions of ancient and medieval India as applicable to bourgeois society, having in mind capitalist-businessmen (Vaishya), the bearers of state power (Kshatriya), on the one hand, and the working people (Shudras) on the other.
70. Swami Vivekananda, *Vartaman Bharat* [Modern India], Calcutta, B.S. 1357, pp. 36-7. In the words of one of the female followers of Vivekananda, he said in 1896 in New York: 'The impending upheaval, which must start a new era, will come from Russia or from China. I cannot say exactly, but this will be one of these countries (R. Rolland, *Life of Vivekananda*,—quoted from Russian translation of R. Rolland's *Works*, vol. 19, 1936, p. 308). Similar information is also given by Vivekananda's younger brother, Bhupendranath Datta (B. Datta, *Swami Vivekananda: Patriot-Prophet*, Calcutta, 1954, p. X). Vivekananda had a keen power of observation. It is known that he was interested in revolutionary movements. It may therefore be assumed that he was able to notice or rather sense from the general signs the shift actually taking place during those years of the

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centre of revolutionary struggle towards the East, exactly in the same way as in the 90s he was able to note the possibility of a big military conflict of 'many countries' or to turn his attention then to the importance of the earliest, still natural and diverse strikes in India.

71. CWV, vol. 6, p. 342.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
73. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 147.
74. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 300.
75. The slogan of *swadeshi* (which means 'own', 'national') became the main slogan of mass actions in the years of the first growth of national-liberation struggle in India in 1905-1908. The most active form of *swadeshi* movement, above all, movement or development of national industry, was the mass boycott of English goods done during these years in Bengal and some other places (for more details see: *Natsional 'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie v Indii i deyatel 'nost' B. G. Tilaka* [National-Liberation Movement in India and the Work of B. G. Tilak], M., 1958).
76. CWV, vol. 5, p. 283.
77. V. Chiról, *Indian Unrest*, London, 1910, p. 13.
78. CWV, vol. 3, p. 300.
79. 'The downfall of India', he wrote, 'took place not because the laws and customs of the ancient times were bad but because these had not been taken to their logical end.' (CWV, vol. 4, p. 270.)
80. That is, confusions.
81. CWV, vol. 6, p. 355.
82. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 147.
83. Pointing out that India is inhabited by a number of peoples each of which has its own language and customs, Vivekananda wrote: 'The one common ground that we have is our sacred tradition, our religion... In Europe, political ideas form the national unity. In Asia, religious ideals form the national unity.' (See CWV, vol. 3, p. 287.)
84. The well-known Bengali thinker and one of the leaders of the early twentieth century radical nationalists, Aurobindo Ghosh, in this context spoke of the 'base ideas of superiority indicated by deity, depending upon accidental birth, ideas of inequality ossified and full of intolerance' [H. and U. Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought (1893-1908)*, Calcutta, 1957, p. 127].
85. 'If god exists, there must exist the possibility of attaining him... Religion is not words and not theory. It is accomplishment. Its essence is not in listening and accepting. It is in being and becoming. It begins where the use of capacity for religious accomplishment begins' (quoted from: R. Rolland, *Universal Gospel of Vivekananda*,—in R. Rolland's *Collected Works* [in Russian], vol. XX, 1936, pp. 17-8).
86. Quoted from: R. Rolland, *Universal Gospel of Vivekananda*, p. 76 (of Russian version in R. Rolland's *Collected Works*).
87. Leo Tolstoy, familiarizing himself with Vivekananda's works, observed not without irony: 'In Hindu philosophy there is a wonderful combination



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of most profound wisdom with unimaginable nonsense. For instance, the judgement on the methods with whose help one should lead oneself to sublimated state: one must sit, holding the back straight, look with both the eyes on the end of one's nose and recite the word 'Om' (A. B. Gol'denvveizer, *Vblizi Tolstogo* [with Tolstoy], vol. I, M., 1922, p. 217).

88. Quoted from: R. Rolland, *Universal Gospel of Viv'kananda* (Russian version), p. 22.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
90. H. and U. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
91. Quoted from: H. Nevinson, *The New Spirit in India*, London, 1909, pp. 227-28.
92. CWV, vol. 4, pp. 267, 269.
93. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 439.
94. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 221; vol. 5, p. 25.
95. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 243.
96. Quoted from: L. Roy, *Young India*, p. 300.
97. (Swami Ramtirtha), *In Words of God-Realisation of the Complete Works of Swami Ramtirtha*, Lucknow, vol. III, 1942, p. 15.
98. *Ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 167.
99. See: V. I. Lenin, *Demokratiya i narodnuchestvo v Kitae* (Democracy and Populism in China),— in V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works* (in Russian), vol. 21, p. 401.
100. Characterizing phenomena of this kind, particularly speaking about the Salvation Army, F. Engels wrote in 1892 that it is reviving the propaganda methods of early Christianity, turns to the poor as to select ones of god, fights against capitalism on its own religious note and thus develops certain aspects of early Christian class struggle, which one fine day would become extremely fatal for the rich people squandering now ready money on this work [F. Engels, *Introduction to the English Edition of 'Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science'* (—quoted from the Russian version in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Works*, 2nd ed., vol. 22, pp. 314-15)]
101. V. I. Lenin, *Dve utopii* (Two Utopias), in V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works* (in Russian), vol. 22, p. 119.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
105. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-21.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S IDEAS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

A. D. LITMAN

THE idea that one often forms about Swami Vivekananda from the vast literature on him is that of a purely religious leader, devoted fully to the service of God and propagation of Vedantism, the theoretical principle of Hindu religion. But there is nothing more erroneous than such an idea. The brief but brilliant life of Swami Vivekananda was full of ardent, varied social activity. And although the outer form of this activity was his formal affiliation to the monastic order of Ramakrishna first as an ordinary sannyasi and then as its leader, the radical content of the life and work of Swami Vivekananda consisted not in service to religion but in service to his homeland, in struggle for the fulfilment of basic interests of his people. The dominating and determining traits of Swami Vivekananda as an outstanding historical personality lay not in his religious mystical ideas but in his democratic convictions, ardent patriotism and enlightenment.

From the very first steps of his conscious life, right up to his untimely death, he, though bearing the spiritual title of 'Swami', never kept himself confined to a monastic *ashrama*, meditating in seclusion on God. He unified the whole of India, and kept a close and direct contact with the life of millions of her people. Clearly convinced of the unheard-of poverty, sufferings and cruel oppression of the working masses, he penetrated deep into their needs and aspirations and strove to find real and effective ways and means of fulfilling their centuries-old aspirations.

### POVERTY OF THE MASSES

Visiting U.S.A. for the first time to attend the Parliament of Religions,<sup>1</sup> Swami Vivekananda had, with his ardent sermon

of spiritual grandeur of India, hoped to attract the attention of the public in Europe and America towards the poverty and sufferings of his people, and to seek aid from the 'mighty' West in the work of mitigating the lot of millions of his countrymen. 'I travelled all over India,'—Swami Vivekananda then said,—'and it was very painful for me to see the terrible poverty and lot of the masses. I cannot hold my tears. I am now firmly convinced that it is no use going on preaching a doctrine to the unfortunate people without mitigating their sufferings and poverty. It is precisely for this, for the poor, suffering people of India that I am going to America.'<sup>2</sup>

However, the anti-people, anti-democratic essence of imperialism, its exploiting nature, its hostility to aspirations for freedom and independence of the oppressed people of colonial and dependent countries did not straightaway present itself before the penetrating look of Swami Vivekananda. And from a passing admiration of the 'mighty' West, Swami Vivekananda turned to a tireless, scathing criticism of the vices and crimes of the Western civilization; and exposed the features of cunning, force, oppression, and cynicism inherent in it. Swami Vivekananda subtly noted that in so far as the wealth and power in the Western countries were concentrated in the hands of a few people, viz. capitalists, they were capable of any crimes for the sake of gain; and the widely publicised statements on freedom, constitution, parliament,—'are but jokes'. 'By this power', wrote Swami Vivekananda, 'they can deluge the whole earth with blood.'<sup>3</sup>

The hypocrisy and falsehood of the bourgeois democracy in the West were particularly ruthlessly exposed by Swami Vivekananda in the example of racial discrimination. His characterization of the position of Negroes in U.S.A. has not lost its relevance even in our days: 'Before the abolition [of slavery in America]',—wrote the Indian thinker,—'these poor Negroes were the property of somebody, and, as properties, they had to be looked after, so that they might not deteriorate. Today they are the property of nobody. Their lives are of no value;

they are burnt alive on mere pretences. They are shot down without any law for their murderers.’<sup>4</sup>

Swami Vivekananda irrevocably and resolutely removed all illusions of assistance from the West and pinned all his hopes and aspirations on the awakening of his own people, on the growth of their own spiritual and physical powers, on the revival of their ancient distinctive culture.

#### ENLIGHTENMENT AND AWAKENING OF THE MASSES

Swami Vivekananda saw in enlightenment one of the decisive means of awakening the masses of India in the struggle for their pressing interests and vital rights, for liquidation of colonial dominance, and for national independence. Above all, he directed his efforts to awaken in his countrymen the feelings of their own dignity, confidence in their own powers, and faith in the future. He carried out an active publicity campaign and tried to provide theoretical grounds for confidence in oneself, in one’s own powers and potentials as one of the most important principles of social activity.

Why have a handful of foreigners been ruling over 300 million people of India for centuries together?—asked Swami Vivekananda. This has been because, Swami Vivekananda reflects, they trust their own selves and their powers, while we, the Indians, have lost this trust. ‘We are led here and there because we cannot help ourselves. . . . We are slaves to ourselves and to others.’<sup>5</sup> In this regard, he makes an ardent appeal to his countrymen: ‘What is needed by our country is muscles of iron, nerves of steel, gigantic will, which nothing can destroy, which, for attaining its aim, would, if necessary, descend to the bottom of the sea and be face to face with death. This is what we need! . . . Confidence, confidence, confidence in oneself! . . . Believe in yourself and get astride on this faith! . . .’<sup>6</sup>

Appealing to the religious sentiment of the Indians, Swami Vivekananda said that while for other religions the atheists are those who do not believe in God, for Vedanta

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‘a man who does not believe in himself is an atheist.’<sup>7</sup> But he does not restrict himself merely to eliciting a religious basis for this principle; he observes that ‘a firm faith in oneself is taught not only by philosophy and psychology, but that the same is clearly expounded also by materialistic sciences. . .’<sup>8</sup>

In his efforts to restore in Indians the sense of their own dignity, Swami Vivekananda develops a whole Vedantic concept according to which man himself is the God in the universe, and it is he, this real God, that should be worshipped. ‘The living god is in you,’—said Vivekananda,—‘and still you construct temples and churches and believe in all possible nonsense. The only god who should be worshipped is the human soul or the human body.’<sup>9</sup>

### CONCEPT OF EQUALITY

If the man himself is the god, it means (and this is what Swami Vivekananda comes to) that all people are equal, that there are no high and low, no ordinary and elect, no masters and slaves. Since all men are equal, the thinker continues, all nations, all people too are equal, and colonial oppression is a contradiction, a phenomenon contrary to natural laws. ‘The same power is in every man. . .’—he writes,—‘the same potential is in everyone. . . . The idea that one man is born superior to another has no meaning in Vedanta; that between two nations one is superior and the other inferior, has no meaning whatsoever.’<sup>10</sup>

These humanistic, enlightening ideas of Swami Vivekananda by themselves aroused in the consciousness of Indians not only a hatred for the alien colonial dominance but also a realisation of what was illegal and contrary to the course of nature, that is, colonial enslavement and oppression. These ideas could not but be inspiring to the Indian people in their hopes for restoring ‘the natural order of things’, that is, for the liquidation of the colonial regime and for winning independence and equal rights with all other peoples of the world.

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### STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Swami Vivekananda does not yet know and does not put forward any real and concrete ways of struggle for national independence; but he understands well that whatever these ways might be, the Indians must display courage, a sense of self-sacrifice, stability and heroism in this struggle. And he tried, with all his power, to imbibe courage and boldness in the Indians. 'From the very cradle,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'people are taught that they are weak, that they are sinners; such teachings only help in weakening the people further... drive away such ideas, superstitions, which obscure your reason, and be courageous.... The aim may still be far off... do not sleep, awake, go, and do not stop till the goal is reached....'<sup>11</sup>

Here one cannot but notice an interesting point in Swami Vivekananda's ideas of enlightenment. While preaching courage, boldness, confidence in oneself, he was far from reducing all these to the idea of passive resistance which during his time was getting widely prevalent in the ideology of the Indian national liberation movement. Swami Vivekananda instead was against the ideas of non-resistance to evil. He pointed out that it was not possible to implement these ideas in practice, for these give rise to constant dissatisfaction with self, and thus 'would create more vices than any other weakness'. He had a deep understanding of the mutual relationship of resistance and non-resistance: Only when man has acquired the power of resistance, will non-resistance, he said, be his virtue. 'Idleness', Swami Vivekananda pointed out, 'must always be avoided. It is activity that always implies resistance. Resist all evil, both spiritual and physical, and if you be successful in this struggle you will attain peace.'<sup>12</sup>

Swami Vivekananda applied his ideas of the equality of people against all vestiges of the past, which in some way or the other were undermining the dignity of some and exalting others. These vestiges above all included the caste system and rejection of untouchables, seclusion and lack of rights of women etc. Vivekananda knew that without a radical change in this

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shameful heritage of the past it was not possible to arouse the self-consciousness of the Indians and to consolidate them for inspired and noble aims. Designating all these survivals by one despising term 'untouchability', Swami Vivekananda stated: '...O ! how I would wish to destroy the boundaries of "untouchability", and, uniting everybody, go exclaiming: "Come, all poor and have-nots, come all of you who can walk on your feet ! We are united, in the name of Ramakrishna"'.<sup>13</sup>

### TRUE ENLIGHTENER

As a true enlightener, Swami Vivekananda was an ardent champion of the education of the people, of wide propagation of knowledge amongst the masses. He subjected to sharp criticism the existing system of education as one of upbringing slaves. He firmly demanded that the colonialists with their orthodox spiritual education should be kept away from the sphere of public education. In his view such education prepared obedient civil servants for the rulers. The clergy simply cheated the people, thereby amassing great wealth and stifling the working people both spiritually and physically. 'The power of the priests and the foreign dominance,'—said Swami Vivekananda, 'have been suppressing the poor people of India for centuries together and at long last they have forgotten what it is to be human beings. Ideas should be given to them, their eyes should be opened to what is happening around them in the wide world, and they will then themselves work for saving them.'<sup>14</sup> Swami Vivekananda saw the source of all suffering, poverty, and oppression of the Indian people only in darkness, obscurity, and illiteracy of the working masses.

### SPIRIT OF ARDENT PATRIOTISM

The Indian thinker believed that the younger generation must be educated and brought up in the spirit of ardent patriotism, in the spirit of unstinted service to the homeland, and that for this it was necessary to assimilate modern practical

knowledge, to receive professional education in all branches of science and technology. Here Swami Vivekananda angrily ridiculed the extremely despicable and arrogant attitude of the moneyed classes towards the education of the working people. 'It matters nothing', he said, 'if the working people, unlike you, have not read books. . . . They are instead the shame of nations in all countries. . . . absorbed in the struggle for existence, they have no possibility of acquiring knowledge. . . . But with the passage of time many men of genius will come out of them'.<sup>15</sup>

With all his religious outlook, Swami Vivekananda did not at all consider religion the determining source in the life of a man. On the other hand, preaching the grandeur of Hinduism, he did at the same time, limit the sphere of influence and application of religion, specially in the field of public education, to the limits of social relations. Turning to those engaged in the service of the cult he said: 'We insist that religion has no right to be the law giver of the public. . . . Keep your hands off! Keep yourself within your limits, and all will be well.'<sup>16</sup>

#### CRITIC OF RELIGIOUS FANATICISM

Swami Vivekananda sharply criticized religious fanaticism regarding it as an obstacle in the way of human progress. 'If there were no fanaticism in the world, it would make much more progress than it does now. It is a mistake', the thinker said, 'to think that fanaticism can make for the progress of mankind. On the contrary it is a retarding element.'<sup>17</sup> It, Swami Vivekananda feels, is particularly unbearable when one talks of the education of the people, of free labour of man: 'When you have avoided fanaticism, then alone will you work well.'<sup>18</sup> He also sharply criticized asceticism, the fanatic mortification of flesh. 'I need sappers and miners in my religious army', he said, 'work up your muscles, boys ! The mortification of flesh is all right for ascetics, but the workers need muscles of steel and well developed body!'<sup>19</sup>



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### STEADFAST FAITH IN PEOPLE

Characterizing Swami Vivekananda's ideas of enlightenment, it must be specially stressed here that their decisive features are a steadfast faith in people, in their great constructive powers, and an ardent love for the working masses, sympathy for their wants and sufferings, and a fervent urge to free them from colonial and social oppression. Dividing the Indian society into two categories of classes—the higher, that is the rich, and the lower, that is the working people,—Vivekananda, for the work of resurrection of India, pinned all his hopes on the latter. He said directly: 'The masses are... the only hope of India. The higher classes are physically and morally dead.'<sup>20</sup> 'Millions of poor people from the lower classes are the ones who build up the real life of the country',<sup>21</sup> he added.

Swami Vivekananda was not yet able to bring himself to a differential approach to various classes in the general masses of the working people but he did call them proletariat not without a sense of satisfaction and as a mark of deep respect for them. 'Our proletariat', he asserted, — 'are doing their duty... day and night... well, is there no heroism in this?... Ye evertrampled labouring classes of India! I bow to you.'<sup>22</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that Swami Vivekananda's democratic convictions led him in the ultimate end to the bold thought of the inevitable coming of the period of rule by *Shudras*, that is, of the emergence of such a society in which the workers themselves would be the ruling and the guiding force.

Swami Vivekananda's ideas of enlightenment retained the stamp of contradictions and inconsistency, inherent in his whole world outlook.

Regarding enlightenment as one of the decisive means of awakening the people, he essentially rejected the political struggle and generally remained away from politics. He directly declared: 'Nothing I say or write should be given any political interpretation'; 'I do not wish to have anything to do with political follies, I do not believe in any politics. God and

truth—these are the only politics in the world. Everything else is absurd.’<sup>23</sup>

#### BASIS OF NATIONAL UNITY

Seeking to restrict the spheres of influence of religion, Swami Vivekananda at the same time asserted that in India religion was the basis of national unity. Therefore, along with caution against interference of religion in the field of social relations, one also finds in him statements of a directly opposite nature. For instance, he stated that ‘political and social reforms must always be carried out in India, proceeding from her religious life . . .’<sup>24</sup>

The idealistic understanding of social life did not make it possible for Swami Vivekananda to discover the real principles of social development; and in this context he did not discern the actual role of the masses in history. Resting his hopes on the working people in the matter of transformations in India, Swami Vivekananda also at the same time allowed subjective-idealistic exaggeration of the role of the individual in historical process. ‘The history of the world’,—he said,—‘is the history of a few people having confidence in themselves. This confidence evokes the deity hidden deep within . . . a handful of strong people will move the world.’<sup>25</sup>

Accordingly, Swami Vivekananda had a typical sceptical attitude towards the competence of the working people to guide social progress in conditions when the ‘rule of the Shudras’ will be established. Expressing the confidence that as a result of widespread enlightenment amongst the people, men of genius will come from amongst the poor, he also at the same time said something totally different while characterizing the future new society: ‘Its advantages’,—he wrote—‘will be the distribution of physical comforts, its disadvantages (perhaps)—the lowering of culture. There will be a great distribution of ordinary education, but extraordinary geniuses will be less and less.’<sup>26</sup>

Applying all his efforts to the work of enlightenment,

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Swami Vivekananda did not go beyond awakening in the masses 'a consciousness of their own strength'. He did not put forward any concrete programmes of mass actions against colonial dominance, or suggest any cardinal measures for liquidating the system of social inequality and oppression. And the natural consequence of such inconsistency, contradictoriness and social-historical limitations of Swami Vivekananda's outlook was that on the whole he was far from the people, and his ideas of enlightenment were, on the whole, of a philanthropic and utopian nature.

### PROGRESSIVE OUTLOOK

But in the specific conditions of late nineteenth-century India, Swami Vivekananda's ideas of enlightenment, as also his entire outlook, were significantly greatly progressive. His teaching had an effective influence on the formation in India of democratic and liberation ideas, advanced for their time. Jawaharlal Nehru names Swami Vivekananda amongst those who laid the 'beginning of new trends of thought'. Swami Vivekananda's ideas influenced also such eminent thinkers and social leaders of India as Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi.

But the main significance of Swami Vivekananda's outlook was in the influence which his ideas wielded on the awakening of national self-consciousness in the Indian people. The life of this eminent Indian thinker came to an abrupt end a little before the onset of the period of 'awakening of Asia', under the influence of the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907. His social-political and specially enlightening ideas objectively helped in the awakening of the wide masses of India, and prepared them for the subsequent growth of national-liberation movement, which, as a result of the heroic efforts of the Indian people, culminated in the historic victory, in the creation of the independent Republic of India.

This is just why we, along with the friendly Indian people,

greatly respect the name of her glorious son, the ardent patriot, humanist-thinker and enlightener, Swami Vivekananda.

NOTES

1. In 1893.
2. Quoted from: Romain Rolland, *Life of Vivekananda* (Russian edition),—in R. Rolland, *Complete Works* (in Russian), vol. XIX, L., 1936, p. 225.
3. Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Mayavati, 1947-1951, vol. 3, p. 158. (Hereafter VCW).
4. *Ibid.*, p. 214.
5. VCW, vol. 6, p. 27.
6. R. Rolland, *op. cit.*, p. 280.
7. Swami Vivekananda, *Practical Vedanta* (quoted from the Russian edition, M., 1912, pp. 8, 16).
8. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
10. VCW, vol. 1, p. 422.
11. Swami Vivekananda, *Practical Vedanta* (Russian edition), p. 64.
12. Swami Vivekananda, *Karma-Yoga*... (quoted from Russian edition, M., 1912, p. 20).
13. Quoted from R. Rolland, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
14. VCW, vol. 4, p. 308.
15. VCW, vol. 7, pp. 347-48.
16. VCW, vol. 4, p. 304.
17. Swami Vivekananda, *Karma-Yoga*..., p. 53.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Quoted from R. Rolland, *op. cit.*, p. 305, note.
20. VCW, vol. 7, p. 341.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 354.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 341.
23. Quoted from R. Rolland, *op. cit.*, p. 275, note.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 278-79.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
26. VCW, vol. 6, p. 343.
27. J. Nehru, *Discovery of India* (quoted from Russian edition, M., 1955, p. 369).

## TOLSTOY AND VIVEKANANDA

A. P. GNATYUK-DANIL'CHUK

I love Indian philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Leo Tolstoy to D. P. Makovitsky  
on 14 October 1909

You can see this [truth] from . . . the books both of ancient as well as modern serious thinkers, starting with the authors of the Indian Vedas, the Buddha, Confucius, Lao-Tzu, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Socrates, Plato, Christ . . . unto Rousseau, Pascal, Kant, Schopenhauer, Emerson, Fichte, Vivekananda, and many, many others.<sup>2</sup>

Tolstoy's Letter of 8 April 1910 to  
F. Ovehinnikov

In India over 200 million people, highly gifted in both spiritual and physical strength, are under the rule of totally alien small circle of peoples, who are immeasurably lower than those whom they rule. The reason thereof, as seen from your letter<sup>3</sup> . . . and from extremely interesting works of the Hindu writer, Swami Vivekananda, is the absence of a rational religious doctrine.

'Letter to a Hindu' (14 December 1908)

### I

**I**T is common knowledge that the doyen of Russian literature, Leo Tolstoy, had a profound philosophical and academic interest in India and Indian philosophy, and felt a sense of deep anguish and wrath on the fate of the extremely talented

Indian people suffering under the foreign yoke. It is also equally well known that Tolstoy has been enjoying singular popularity in India where, out of love and respect, he is called *rishi*, an epithet used by the Indians for their sages of yore right from the time of the Vedas.

Mahatma Gandhi believed himself to be a dedicated admirer of Leo Tolstoy, 'owing him much in life'. Gandhi and Tolstoy exchanged letters, and this correspondence is not only well known but already fairly well studied.

But what to this day remains virtually obscure or known only in a distorted form is the great place which Tolstoy's contemporary, one of the most eminent thinkers and social leaders of modern India, Swami Vivekananda, and his preceptor, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, held in Tolstoy's quests of spiritual life in the last years of his life.

The first Russian book to dwell upon the Vivekananda-Tolstoy theme, among other things, is Tolstoy and the East by A. I. Shifman,<sup>5</sup> for many years associated with the Tolstoy Museum at Yasnaya Polyana. This valuable study, though copious and rich in factual material, devotes only a few pages to the theme. The subsequent works dealing with Tolstoy and India—for instance, the interesting chapter 'Asia's Reply to Tolstoy' in the well-known work *Tolstoy and the Contemporary World* by the Soviet scholar of Tolstoy studies, K. Lomunov;<sup>6</sup> and the article 'Tolstoy and the Literature of the East' by the eminent Soviet Indologist, E. P. Chelyshev<sup>7</sup>—are also generally evasive in the matter of Tolstoy's interest in Vivekananda. Only Professor V. S. Kostyuchenko of the Department of Philosophy of the Moscow University, in his fine monograph on Swami Vivekananda, mentions casually that 'Vivekananda's Raja-Yōga had aroused keen interest in the most diverse countries and amongst the most diverse thinkers—from Leo Tolstoy to one of the founders of pragmatism, William James.'<sup>8</sup> But Professor Kostyuchenko has taken this reference not directly from Tolstoy's works but from Romain Rolland's well known article entitled 'Asia's Reply to Tolstoy'.

We find that the best, though concise, that has been said on this theme is by Romain Rolland, the author of most profound and extensive works on Vivekananda and Ramakrishna, translated also into Russian. These works have, over the years, been a good source of inspiration not only for the scholars of the subject but also for those who have been interested in modern Indian thought. 'The religious firmament of India was most brightly illuminated by stars of the first magnitude that had suddenly started shining in it... the two wonders of the spirit: Ramakrishna (1836-1886), the godly inspired man who had enveloped all forms of deity with his love, and his pupil, still more powerful than the teacher, Vivekananda (1863-1902), whose tempestuous energy had awakened the effective god, the god of Gita in his suffering people, for centuries to come... Tolstoy, with his vast curious spirit, of course, knew about them... In 1896 he had felt exhilarated to see Vivekananda's first published works *Yoga's Philosophy and Lectures on Raja Yoga*. He was also delighted at Vivekananda's book on Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna. It is the misfortune of mankind that Vivekananda, in the course of his travels in Europe in 1900, was not advised to go to Yasnaya Polyana. The author of this book [Romain Rolland] is not happy at the thought that in this year of the World Fair, when the great Swami passed through Paris, surrounded by such bad guides, he was not able to bring together the two clairvoyants, the two religious geniuses of Europe and Asia.'<sup>9</sup> In his biography of Vivekananda, Romain Rolland adds that up to June 1895 he had completed the redaction of his famous treatise on Raja Yoga, which was destined to *inspire* (italics mine.—author) Tolstoy,<sup>10</sup> but, Rolland continues in his *Life of Tolstoy*: 'the fatal movement of the historical stream took Tolstoy away from the yogis with their terror of god to the threshold of the great work of Vivekananda and Gandhi—Hind Swaraj.'<sup>11</sup>

We have quoted in full these statements of Romain Rolland, for these alone provide the correct key to Tolstoy's assessment

of Vivekananda. Other works of western scholars on Tolstoy have only a brief reference that Tolstoy had read Raja Yoga.

The theme being dwelt upon here did not also find its full expression in India despite the fact that some Indian works have reproduced and interpreted whatever little there is of this in Shifman's book. It is, we may add here, therefore very important to rectify the errors and discrepancies in this work, though we must stress that doing this does not in any way belittle the great contribution of the author, the first to take up this important aspect. One valuable book, containing many interesting ideas and facts on Tolstoy-India theme, is that recently published under the title *Bharatpathik Leo Tolstoy* [Leo Tolstoy, the traveller to India] by Jhara Basu,<sup>12</sup> with a foreword by the well-known Bengali writer and literary scholar, Annada Shankar Ray, who calls himself a pupil of Tolstoy.

How is it, then, that, save Romain Rolland, no one has so far made a well-established and correct estimate of Vivekananda's place in the life of Tolstoy? This, first of all, as we see, is because Tolstoy did not write any complete commentary on the works of Vivekananda; the observations on the Indian philosopher lie scattered on the pages of his less accessible works and cannot be pieced together without surveying a large amount of material and without scrupulous analysis. Secondly, this is also sometimes due to the lack of proper study of the complex world outlook of the writer and, sometimes, to the one-sided approach to it.

The present paper has no pretensions to a full treatment of the Tolstoy-Vivekananda theme; it simply seeks to focus attention on this vital subject. This study is based only on Tolstoy's own assessments and observations found expressed in various articles, letters, entries in diaries of the later years, and also on extensive notes (only very recently published) of his personal physician and friend, D. P. Makovitsky, who, from 1905, was always with Tolstoy right up to the writer's death. We have tried to follow the course of development of the writer's thoughts



and the circle of his interests within the framework of the present theme, elucidating the actual statements of Tolstoy where necessary.

## II

On 13 September 1896 Leo Tolstoy wrote to Anendra Kumar Datta<sup>13</sup> who had sent him Vivekananda's book [Yoga's Philosophy. Lectures on Raja Yoga, or Conquering Internal Nature, NY, 1896] : 'I received your letter and the book, and thank you very much for both. The book is most remarkable and I have received much instruction from it. The metaphysical side of the doctrine, the precept as to what the true "I" of a man is, is excellent. So far humanity has frequently gone backwards from the true and lofty and clear conception of the principle of life, but never surpassed it.'<sup>14</sup>

The next day [on 14 September] he writes in his diary: 'During this time there has been a letter from a Hindu "Tod" (A. K. Datta) and a charming book of Indian wisdom.'<sup>15</sup> To understand what attracted Tolstoy to this book, we shall refer to one more document. On 14 October the same 1896 year he wrote to P. V. Verigin<sup>16</sup>: 'Thanks to books, I have come in contact, this present autumn, with a Hindu, who fully shares with us our Christian views and has sent me a book of a compatriot of his, expounding the doctrine of the Brahmins, having semblance with the essence (*italics mine*.—author) of the teaching of Christ.'<sup>17</sup> Thus, Tolstoy found in Vivekananda's works an echo of his own reflections on the true essence of Christianity cleansed from later distortions. It is therefore difficult to agree with A. I. Shifman who believes that 'in the passionate tirades of Vivekananda, Tolstoy heard the echoes of the early teachings of the ancient Indians, and particularly many motifs of the Vedas congenial to him.'<sup>18</sup> We see that Vivekananda's very first work read by Tolstoy left on him an indelible impression and for ever became one of the favourite books of the writer.

## III

About Ramakrishna Tolstoy obviously knew little at that time. He came to know Ramakrishna's sayings for the first time in 1903 when he received from Germany the journal 'Theosophiser Wegweiser' and in his copy underlined Ramakrishna's numerous aphorisms. 'Much here is the same as my own understanding', he wrote then in his diary.<sup>19</sup> Some of these sayings in a revised form found place in Tolstoy's books: [Sayings] For Every Day, Circle of Reading, and Way of Life. But far greater impression on Tolstoy was made by excerpts sent to him by K. A. Sergeenko from Max Müller's book *The Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa* Tolstoy wrote to Sergeenko on 13 February 1906: 'Ramakrishna I know, and I have many excerpts from his sayings. I know him from theosophy journals. The fine thoughts you have recorded are not there. Where did you take them from?'<sup>20</sup> And, in his conversation with D. Makovitsky, Tolstoy observed: 'Sergeenko has sent me extracts from Müller's book *Ramakrishna*. His selection of the "sayings" is wonderful. Ramakrishna died 50(?) years ago. The most brilliant wise man!'<sup>21</sup> But Tolstoy at that time apparently did not know that Vivekananda was Ramakrishna's pupil.

We shall note here that during this period Tolstoy also kept up correspondence with Baba Premananda Bharati (Surendranath Mukherjee), a pupil of Vivekananda, who in 1902 had emigrated from India to U.S.A. and was in Los Angeles publishing the journal 'The Light of India'. Bharati had sent Tolstoy a book on Krishna which had evoked the writer's interest.<sup>22</sup> Tolstoy's letter of 3/16 February 1907 to Bharati about this book is of special interest, for it enables us to have a better understanding of some subsequent statements of the writer on Vivekananda: 'The metaphysical, religious idea of Krishna so well expounded in your book is the eternal and universal basis of all religions and all philosophical systems. It is the truth that the essence of everything existent... is love

and that human soul is the emanation of this essence. . . . But in Krishna's religion, as also in all ancient religions, there exist assertions which not only cannot be established but are a clear product of unrestrained imagination and are moreover not necessary at all. . . . Such . . . are all stories of miracles. . . .'<sup>23</sup>

## IV

Tolstoy's further familiarity with Vivekananda, more complete and profound, judging from all available records, took place in 1908, although we would wish to stress here that Tolstoy was the very first Russian to know and appraise the brilliant Indian philosopher as early as in 1896 immediately after the publication of Vivekananda's works. This time Tolstoy's introduction to Vivekananda took place through the Russian writer I. F. Nazhivin, who had himself translated Vivekananda's two speeches and 'Hymn of Creation'.<sup>24</sup> These, so far as we are aware, were the very first translations into Russian of Vivekananda's works.

I. F. Nazhivin advised Tolstoy to read not Baba Bharati's book on Krishna but another better one<sup>25</sup> (Nazhivin's letter of 29 June 1907). And on 7 July 1907, Tolstoy, in his reply, sent a request to Nazhivin: 'Please send the Brahmin's book. Reading of such book surpasses all pleasure. This is elation of the soul.'<sup>26</sup> But the book, it seems, did not then reach Leo Tolstoy, for there is no reference to his reading it. Therefore, A. Shifman's statement that Tolstoy read Vivekananda's 'Speeches and Articles' in 1907 obviously does not correspond to facts. On the other hand, in 1908, Tolstoy, on receiving Nazhivin's aforesaid translations, could not help expressing his exclamation: 'I have just finished reading your wonderful book *The Voices of the People* and I wish to say thanks for this.'<sup>27</sup> (Letter of 9 March 1908 to Nazhivin.) 'The Hindu's article has left a great impression on me. This is unusually good.'<sup>28</sup> (Letter of 12 March 1908 to Nazhivin.) The writer once again felt his nearness to Vivekananda: 'Yesterday read the Hindu's wonder-

ful article [God and Man], translated into Russian by Nazhivin. Here are my thoughts, obscurely expressed,'<sup>29</sup> wrote Leo Tolstoy in his diary on 10 March 1908.

Tolstoy made all efforts to have Vivekananda's works. On 25 May 1908 he told D. P. Makovitsky that he had read two volumes of Swami Vivekananda<sup>30</sup> received on that day. 'Surprisingly profound on god, soul, man, unity of religions. He is Ramakrishna's pupil, and died in 1902.'<sup>31</sup> It is only at this stage that Tolstoy at last came to know about the unusual bonds between these two thinkers so close to him.

Leo Tolstoy now began enthusiastically his reading of Vivekananda's works. He took notes and underlined what specially impressed him. Unfortunately, these books, so far as we know, have not been located. We are only left with copious notes on these books in Tolstoy's own diary and also the day-to-day notes (for instance, made on 5, 21, 23, and from 26 to 29 June 1908) of D. P. Makovitsky. We shall be citing some of these notes here. On June 5, 1908, Tolstoy told Makovitsky: 'Since six in the morning I have been thinking of Vivekananda. Yesterday, read Vivekananda whole day. There is a chapter on justification of violent means of resisting the evil. Very talentedly written.'<sup>32</sup>

On 21 June 1908 he talked to V. G. Chertkov about Swami Vivekananda's article on Krishna. This article essentially touched upon the problem of righteousness or unrighteousness of violence or non-violence. Tolstoy said: 'Krishna sometimes commands that evil be rewarded by good and sometimes kills the evil-doer and then resurrects him and makes him feel the joy of life ("Tolstoy", Makovitsky says, "elucidated it in the sense that this was toning down of punishment, that this leads to the same law of reward of evil by good").'<sup>33</sup> D. P. Makovitsky wrote on 26 June 1908: 'Yesterday Tolstoy came to the hall with one of Swami Vivekananda's three volumes. . . . "Excellent book, so many thoughts are here for circle of reading", said Tolstoy (and, later, while I galvanized his head, he read Vivekananda and underlined some sentences).'<sup>34</sup>

What precisely interested Tolstoy at this time and what he was reflecting upon can be understood by referring to an entry in his diary on 26 June 1908: 'Felt now for the first time the possibility, as Vivekananda says, that "I" could completely yield to "you"—Felt the possibility of self-denial not for the sake of anything but for the sake of sound sense. . . . It is most difficult and even most necessary to escape from this terrible indulgence with self and with one's "I". And I am beginning—now before my death—to sense the possibility of such renunciation of one's "I". [For me] it's not much of a virtue.'<sup>35</sup>

We would wish to stress here how greatly self-exacting Tolstoy was, even to the extent of being merciless to himself. Tolstoy never spared even the greatest authorities (not even Shakespeare) in any walk of life, particularly on art and literature, when it came to making critical comments when necessary. In short, Tolstoy judged harshly both his own self and others. For instance, he spoke to Chertkov on 28 June 1908: 'Vivekananda greatly disappoints me. He writes about miracles which he has seen and himself performed. . . . How oddly it conjoins with depth of thought.'<sup>36</sup> And, on 29 June 1908, he records in his diary: 'I am reading a Hindu—very witty, verbose and blank. He wants to justify their belief in subjective beings and their doubts in them. . . . One thing is and one thing is undoubted: my life and my possibility and need to decide how to conduct it. Only this alone is the basis of all religions, the basis of all philosophies. And this alone exists.'<sup>37</sup> Leo Tolstoy does not notice that he is possibly contradicting his own self, contradicting that note which he had made in his diary on 26 June. But there is also no doubt in that Tolstoy always denied the existence of so-called miracles and sharply condemned one's belief in them, first of all in Christian practices. Not being familiar with all principal works of Vivekananda, he erringly found in him this belief in 'miracles' although Vivekananda, as is well known, had censured such a belief.<sup>38</sup>

Fuel was added to fire when, during these very days, the

leaders of theosophical society—Kamenskaya, Pisareva, and others—came to Yasnaya Polyana. When Pisareva ‘started entering into supernatural explanations’, Tolstoy exclaimed: ‘Here is the very thing which repulses me. This is something which can be discovered in unnatural way. This characteristic is also there in Vivekananda.’<sup>39</sup>

In his talks with the theosophists, Leo Tolstoy gave expression to some of his original, profound thoughts, which make it possible for us to understand better his concept of essential problems of Indian philosophy and religion. Tolstoy said: ‘We live in an illusory world; life is ever and ever more an awakening in me and in us of the divine source, a spiritual one.... The material world, what does it exist for?... How can one know why the world exists?... I am engaged in how to assist each other in the best possible way, and... this field is endless, field of liberation.... If anything frightens me, it is to be born in a palace and not in a slum. Life is the process of liberation of spiritual source, the very source which is there in the convict and in everybody. And our efforts must be directed towards this and not towards what these “ethers” are and what will happen to our souls. And this most vital thing has been said everywhere.... [Theosophy] is the most impure truth when one judges that none is able to know, observe soul for 1,000 years; what sort of substance this is which can observe the soul for 1,000 years—this is absurd.’<sup>40</sup>

The theosophists went away, and Tolstoy’s irritation waned out in a few days. On 4 July 1908 he noted in his diary in quite another tone: ‘Read Vivekananda’s article on god—an excellent one. Should be translated. I myself thought of this itself. His criticism of Schopenhauer’s will is quite true. Only one thing is not true—where he begins with (objective) judgement about the world.’<sup>41</sup> As we see, Tolstoy here takes the ground of uncognizability of the highest source. Further, he ponders over problems of destruction of evil and of enhancing the good and, in his diary, makes a note of Vivekananda’s ideas which he fully subscribes to: ‘Vivekananda says that the

eternal destruction of evil and enhancement of good are not possible, but this is not possible only because of the notion of time or because of the notion of implementation. But there should be neither of these. Increasing of the good in myself and in the world are life—mine as well as that of the world. This increase cannot be achieved [but one must try, for], the process of this increase is life itself-fulfilling one's purpose in life—increasing of good, I am only fulfilling my purpose.'<sup>42</sup>

A general assessment of Vivekananda's works made by Tolstoy after he had familiarized himself with a large number of his works, is most clearly seen in his article 'Religion and Science' (completed on 17 August 1908). Though, as mentioned earlier, some critical comments made by Tolstoy on Vivekananda were in his personal diaries or talks, and not for the press, the article 'Religion and Science' was duly meant for publication. Here he virtually says that mankind must assimilate the heritage of Vivekananda along with that of the other sages. He writes: 'The task before the leading thinkers of mankind now... is to show the inevitability and need of what has ever been regarded as Prajna [knowledge]. And to show that this knowledge was long known to mankind and manifested itself both in the teaching of religion as well as in the teachings of the sages, not only Indian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman, but also the later ones unto the very last: Kant, Schopenhauer, Vivekananda....'<sup>43</sup>

## V

During the last year and a half of his life Tolstoy paid great attention to the problems of contemporary life of India, of liberation of its people. As is known, the impetus for this was provided by the letter from the young Indian revolutionary, Taraknath Das. Tolstoy took almost half a year to write his famous 'Letter to a Hindu' (completed on 14 December 1908), addressed apparently to an individual but essentially a message to the entire Indian people. It is not a matter of

mere coincidence that not only Vivekananda's name is mentioned twice in the text of this letter but one of the sections of the letter itself opens with an epigraph from Vivekananda—'God is one whole; we are only its parts' (Vivekananda's exposition of the teaching of the Vedas).<sup>44</sup> As is known, this letter later initiated the correspondence between Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi which afterwards also played an important role in the growth of national liberation movement in India. A survey of this correspondence, or its detailed analysis, is beyond the scope of the present short paper. Besides, it is now widely known both in India and USSR.

On 16 February 1909 Tolstoy received the third volume of Vivekananda's *Speeches and Writings* presented to him by an Indian. Makovitsky records that Tolstoy read it and liked it immensely in the same way as he had done the earlier two volumes.<sup>45</sup> Incidentally, this volume was destined to be the last book of Vivekananda to be received by Tolstoy.

On 7 May 1909 Tolstoy spoke to the editor of the *Posrednik* publishing house (which used to bring out Tolstoy's own works): 'The most eminent of modern Indian thinkers is Vivekananda and he should be published.'<sup>46</sup> So Tolstoy had in mind the publication of an anthology of Vivekananda's sayings. In fact, in his article 'On Education' (completed on 1 May 1909), he again mentioned Vivekananda amongst the best thinkers of the world, alongside Socrates, Rousseau, Kant, etc.<sup>47</sup>

Tolstoy continued to stress the need for reading Vivekananda; for instance, on 24 June 1909, he made an interesting observation in respect of *Vekhi*, the well-known collection of Russian philosophical tracts of early twentieth century: 'It is not worth reading, the *Vekhi*. . . when one has such (things) for reading as Ramakrishna, the Buddha, Vivekananda, the Gospel. . .'<sup>48</sup>

In 1910 also, which unfortunately turned out to be the last year of his life, Tolstoy continued to appreciate Viveka-



nanda and take interest in Indian philosophy, maybe more than before. Thus, while talking to Bulanzhe on 28 January 1910 about the book *Theosophy and Modern Psychology*, by Annie Besant, Tolstoy said: 'She rests on what is weak, what is erroneous, and *Vivekananda on what is true* (emphasis mine.—author).<sup>49</sup> This observation of Tolstoy further corroborates what a great contrast he discerned between the theosophists and Vivekananda, and how very akin was the thinking of these two great minds in respect of theosophy, specially in the attitude to so-called 'miracles'.

On 12 March 1910, on receiving a book entitled *The Fountain-Head of Religion* from Rama Deva, the publisher of the journal 'The Vedic Magazine', Tolstoy exclaimed: 'This book has given me great joy. I have, for the first time, understood that we have become accustomed to regard, as gods, the "god-creator", "god-Christ", "god-Mohammad", who soar in the skies; and (as regards) the god who is the source of everything...only such great minds as the ancient Indian sages can attain this great concept. Were there no Krishna, there would have been for us no concept of god. Our Christian notions of spiritual life come from the ancient Hebrew, and the Hebrew notions from the Assyrian, and the Assyrian from the Indian...the older, the loftier.'<sup>50</sup>

Proceeding chronologically, we come to 29 March 1910 when Tolstoy met the famous Czech thinker, statesman, and revolutionary, Jan Massaryk, and, among other things, asked him if he was reading Indian philosophy. Tolstoy told Massaryk that the greatest philosopher of modern India is Vivekananda.<sup>51</sup>

To conclude, I would like to say that, for Tolstoy, Vivekananda had indeed become, and remained unto the last, a living personification of the spiritual richness of modern India. After Tolstoy's death, his followers, including Nazhivin in particular, arranged the publication of Russian translations of a number of books of Vivekananda, as also of *The Gospel of Ramakrishna* and of Max Müller's books on Ramakrishna.<sup>52</sup>

## VI

Interest in the life and work of this remarkable Indian patriot thinker, and social leader has been growing from day to day all the world over, including the Soviet Union. Apart from the books and articles already mentioned in Section I of this paper, those lately published in the Soviet Union and deserving mention here include Professor Kostyuchenko's monograph on Neo-Vedanta, with one chapter devoted to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, and Professor Rybakov's book bearing the title *Bourgeois Reformation of Hinduism* [in Russian].

The Soviet scholars in the Moscow University and other universities of USSR and in the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences are continuing their work on Vivekananda studies with unabated vigour.

Vivekananda's works are being read with keen interest in the Soviet Union today, and have even inspired our writers and poets.

The following lines from Valentin Sidorov's poem on Vivekananda are an eloquent testimony of this interest:

It has been rightly said of him:  
He was like a naked sword,  
His thought was ringing like a steel blade,  
Glistening, sparkling, fluttering.  
A stroke, another stroke!

This Spake  
Vivekananda to his followers:  
'We are not weak. And if you are weak  
It is because you love your own weakness.'<sup>53</sup>

## NOTES

1. D. P. Makovitsky: *Yasnopolyanskie zapiski* [Notes from Yasnaya Polyana], Vol. IV, p. 77, in the series *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* [Literary Heritage], Vol. 90, bks. 1, 2, 3, and 4, Moscow, 1981. (Hereafter Mak.)

## TOLSTOY AND VIVEKANANDA

2. Leo Tolstoy: *Complete Works* (in Russian, in 90 Vols., Moscow-Leningrad, 1928-1958), Vol. 81, p. 220. (Hereafter *CW*.)
3. Letter of 24 May 1908 from the Indian revolutionary Taraknath Das to Leo Tolstoy (*CW*, Vol. 37, pp. 245-72).
4. *CW*, Vol. 37, p. 246. As is known, the 'Letter to a Hindu' was one of the reasons for Mahatma Gandhi to address Leo Tolstoy; this letter was later published with Gandhi's prefatory note. The idealistic nature of Tolstoy's thought here is quite obvious; but, as rightly noted by K. Lomunov, the Soviet scholar of Tolstoy studies, 'the "Letter to a Hindu" is expressive of deep compassion of the great Russian writer whose voice was listened to by the whole world. This letter filled the hearts of the Indians with joy and hope and encouraged them in their struggle for liberation. . . . Gandhi at once understood and appraised the whole significance of Tolstoy's address to the Indian people.' (See K. Lomunov: *Tolstoy and the Contemporary World* (in Russian), Moscow, 1975, p. 374.)
5. A. I. Shifman: *Tolstoy and India*. Eng. tr. Delhi, 1969, 2nd ed. 1978. (Quotations here are from this edition.)
6. K. Lomunov: *op. cit.*
7. E. P. Chelyshev: *Tolstoi i literatura Vostoka* [Tolstoy and the Literature of the East] in *L. N. Tolstoi i sovremennost. Sb. statei i materialov* [Tolstoy and the World of His Time], Moscow, 1981.
8. V. S. Kostyuchenko: *Vivekananda* (in Russian), Moscow, 1977, p. 122.
9. See Romain Rolland: *Complete Works* (in Russian), vol. 14, p. 338.  
We shall observe here that it is apparently on the basis of this statement that A. I. Shifman writes without any basis: 'There exists an indication that Swami Vivekananda, during his travels in Europe in 1900, intended to visit Yasnaya Polyana.' (A. I. Shifman: *Leo Tolstoy and the East* [in Russian], Moscow, 1971, p. 131.)  
Vivekananda intended to visit Russia in April 1897, but this visit did not materialize for reasons not known. (See his letter to Josephine MacLeod in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. VIII, p. 392. There is no reference in Vivekananda's works or in the literature on him that Vivekananda intended to visit Yasnaya Polyana in 1900.)
10. Romain Rolland: *Complete Works* (in Russian), vol. 19, p. 258.
11. *Ibid*, vol. 14, p. 338.
12. Jhara Basu: *Bhāratpathik Leo Tolstoy* [Leo Tolstoy, the traveller to India], Calcutta, 1963.
13. Reference to this exchange of letters is found in the chapter on Romain Rolland in the book *Tirthankar* (in Bengali; new edition, Calcutta, 1982, p. 21) by the well-known Indian musician, Dilip Kumar Roy, a friend of Anendra Kumar Datta:

Romain Rolland: You will be surprised, Dilip, if I tell you that Tolstoy, in the last years of his life, was charmed by Vivekananda's writings. Tolstoy's close friend, P. Biryukov, and numerous other scholars keep chanting Vivekananda's name even now. In Russia, specially, there are even more of such people.

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Dilip Roy: That they are so influenced by Vivekananda I did not know. All I knew was that Tolstoy, in the last years of his life, was charmed by Vivekananda, and this because a Bengali friend of mine had sent to him... a copy of Vivekananda's *Raja-yoga*. Tolstoy had later written to him, 'It is doubtful if in this age (another) man has ever risen above this selfless spiritual meditation.'

14. *CW*, vol. 69, p. 145 (also in Dilip Kumar Roy: *Tirthankar*, p. 21).
15. *CW*, vol. 53, p. 106. ('Tod'—this is how the name of A. K. Datta is found in Tolstoy's diary.)
16. Peter Vasil'evich Verigin (1859-1924)—the leader of the big group of 'dukhobory' (followers of L. Tolstoy); went away to Canada in 1902, after 15-year exile. Follower and correspondent of Leo Tolstoy, who wrote sixteen letters to Verigin between 1895 and 1909.
17. *CW*, vol. 69, p. 169.
18. A. Shifman, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
19. *CW*, vol. 54, p. 155.
20. *CW*, vol. 76, pp. 98-9.
21. *Mak.* vol. II, p. 64.
22. *Shree Krishna, the Lord of Love*, NY, 1904.
23. *CW*, vol. 77, pp. 37-8.
24. See: (i) 'My Master', speech made by Swami Vivekananda at the Vedanta Society in New York, published in Russian translation in the anthology *V daline skorbi* [in the Spaces of Sorrow] (Moscow, 1907, pp. 183-204).  
 (ii) 'God and Man', speech made by Swami Vivekananda, in the anthology: I. Nazhivin, *Golosa narodov* [Voices of the Peoples] (Moscow, 1908, pp. 65-79).  
 (iii) *Gimn tvoreniya* [Hymn of Creation], in the same anthology of Nazhivin, pp. 80-1. •
25. *Mak.*, vol. II, p. 457.
26. *CW*, vol. 77, p. 151.
27. *CW*, vol. 78, pp. 78-9.
28. *CW*, vol. 78, pp. 84-5.
29. *CW*, vol. 56, p. 129.
30. These books were sent to Tolstoy by S. R. Chitale.
31. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 98.
32. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 106. It may be remarked here that some scholars and literary critics claim that Tolstoy censured Vivekananda for his belief in violent means of struggle against evil. This wrong understanding, it appears, originates from the assertion made by Bhupendranath Datta (see, for example, Jhara Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 22), who seems to go to the extent of saying that Tolstoy did so in his letter to Taraknath Das. The letter is available in original in Tolstoy's *Complete Works* (vol. 37, pp. 245-272), but we did not find any such censure there.
33. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 122.
34. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 125.

35. *CW*, vol. 56, p. 137.
36. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 126.
37. *CW*, vol. 56, p. 364.
38. I feel that Tolstoy gathered this wrong impression about Vivekananda's belief in miracles from writings or talks of the theosophists who had a penchant for such things. Tolstoy would never have formed this wrong impression if only he had read Vivekananda's speeches against miracles. In fact, in his letter to the editor of the *Light of the East* (see S. P. Basu's *Vivekananda O Samakalin Bharatavarsa* [Vivekananda and Contemporary India], vol. III, p. 83), Vivekananda unambiguously stated: 'I have always found "Occultism" injurious and weakening to humanity. . . . For centuries we have been stuffed with the mysterious, the result is that our intellectual and spiritual digestion is almost hopelessly impaired and the race has been dragged down to the depths of hopeless imbecility. . . .' Sankari Prasad Basu, in his book (vol. III, pp. 39-113), gives an excellent, exhaustive treatment of this question of Vivekananda versus theosophists. See also V. S. Kostyuchenko, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

Thus, if Tolstoy has casually and out of context made some critical comments on Vivekananda, one should not take them in their literal sense, as Shifman and others sometimes did. Tolstoy considered Vivekananda a part of his inner world; and while he discussed him with others or made some comments on him, this was rather some sort of loud thinking for exchange of views and not any judgement on Vivekananda. Tolstoy had an exceptionally high overall assessment about him.

39. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 127.
40. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 128.
41. *CW*, vol. 56, p. 138.
42. *CW*, vol. 56, p. 365.
43. *CW*, vol. 37, p. 361.

It is interesting to note here that Tolstoy at this time, as he says, is going further away from Christianity (Makovitsky, vol. IV, Notes of 13 August 1908). It is possible that this was due to Tolstoy's reading of two volumes of Vivekananda.

44. *CW*, vol. 37, p. 269.
45. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 333.
46. *Mak.*, vol. III, p. 104.
47. *CW*, vol. 38, p. 68.
48. *Mak.*, vol. III, note on 24 June 1909.
49. *Mak.*, vol. IV, p. 166.
50. *Mak.*, vol. IV, p. 196.
51. *Mak.*, vol. IV, p. 213.
52. We give a list of these books:

- (i) *Filosofya yoga* (philosophy of yoga). Lectures given in New York in the winter of 1895 on Raja-yoga, including also Patanjali's aphorisms with commentary. Tr. by Ya. Popov, Sosnitsa, 1911.

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- (ii) Vivekananda, *Swami: Prakticheskaya Vedanta* (Practical Vedanta), Moscow, 1912.
  - (iii) Vivekananda, *Swami: Karma Yoga*, Moscow, 1912 (2nd ed., Petrograd, 1916).
  - (iv) Vivekananda, *Swami: Bhakti Yoga*; Lectures rev. and pub. by Swami Saradananda. Tr. from 2nd Calcutta ed. by Ya. Popov, St. Petersburg (SPb.), 1914.
  - (v) Ramakrishna: *Provozvestie Ramakrishny* (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna). Tr. from Eng. ed. with a foreword and introd. by Swami Abhedananda, SPb., 1914.
  - (vi) *Filosofiya Vedanty* (The Philosophy of Vedanta) by M. Muller. Tr. from Eng. by N. F. Nazhivin, Moscow, 1912.
  - (vii) M. Müller: *Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, his life and doctrine*. Tr. from English by N. F. Nazhivin, Moscow, 1913.
53. Valentin Sidorov: 'Vivekananda', a poem [in Russian].

## CONCEPTION OF NEO-VEDANTISM

V. S. KOSTYUCHENKO

A principally new stage in the history of Vedanta, as also in the history of India on the whole, begins in the nineteenth century. The half-a-millennium period separating this century from the time when the forming of the main trends of classical Vedanta came to an end, was full of political upheavals: waves of foreign conquerors invaded the Indian peninsula one after the other, great empires arose and vanished like a mirage. But all these events, 'howsoever endlessly intricate, outrageous, and ruinous might be their effect on India, touched her only perfunctorily'.<sup>1</sup> The social structure of India was modified, but it did not undergo any radical change.

But the latest of these conquests of India turned out in many ways, to be unlike the previous ones. This was the British conquest, dating usually from the year 1757 (Battle of Plassey) to 1859 (the end of the Great Uprising). True, the methods employed by the British had nothing new in them; as also in the preceding centuries, the conquerors exploited in full measure the intra-national, intra-tribe, religious, and caste differences amongst the Indians. But the results turned out to be totally different. The mode of life preserved over many, many centuries, was impaired within a few decades: the traditional Indian community received a shattering blow; the irrigation system, vitally important for the population, was destroyed; constant inflow of cheap English goods ruined millions of Indian craftsmen. For a considerable time, this destruction of the former social foundations was not accompanied by an equally intensive restoration or renewal of them. 'The old world is lost without acquiring the new'.<sup>2</sup>

### NEW SOCIAL ORDER

But a new social and economic order nevertheless did

gradually gather momentum in India. The grounds for the downfall of the colonial system of rule were created unknowingly by the British themselves. After suppressing the Great Uprising, England very promptly built a network of railway lines while also giving it a strategic importance.<sup>3</sup> But the chain of historical consequences of the building up of this network turned out to be unexpected for the builders. And already in the middle of the nineteenth century this is distinctly noticed at least by one man,—namely, Karl Marx. ‘The railways,’ in his words, ‘will become...in India a real harbinger of modern industry....Modern Industry... will lead to destruction of system of traditional division of labour....’ And lastly, ‘the population of India will not be able to reap the fruits of ripening of those elements of new society which were sowed in them by the British bourgeoisie... so long as the Indians themselves do not become sufficiently strong to throw away for ever the British yoke.’<sup>4</sup> History has proved right these prophesies. By the end of the nineteenth century, there emerged in India hundreds of factories and plants, a working class and industrial bourgeoisie; and the liberation movement gathered ever greater momentum. There was also established in 1885 an organization which expressed the interests of the national bourgeoisie and which was destined to lead the struggle for independence of India right to its triumphant finale—viz. the Indian National Congress (INC). By the end of the century, partly within the Congress, and partly outside it, there also took shape two conflicting political trends—the radical-democratic and liberal, whose representatives then came to be called the ‘moderates’ and the ‘extremists’.<sup>5</sup> The slogans of the ‘extremists’ about the unity of *swaraja* (independence) and *suraja* (good rule) expressed the typical tendency towards unification of anti-feudal and anti-colonial aspirations characteristic of progressive political thought of India.



## CONCEPTION OF NEO-VEDANTISM

### LANGUAGE OF RELIGION

What is typical here is that the 'extremists' not only formulated their slogans and calls, employing the language of religion, undoubtedly helping to enhance the popularity of their ideology, but also turned to the ideas of the Vedanta. These ideas of the Vedanta were put forth by the leaders of the 'extremists' (specially, B. G. Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh and others, in early twentieth century) to counterbalance the passion for English social philosophy, above all, of the positivist and utilitarian type, then fashionable amongst the moderate wing of Congressmen. It should be said here that many protagonists of positivism, specially those moving within the circles of colonial administration, unfolded in India a fairly intensive but one-sided activity, often combining a sharp and just criticism of a number of outdated dogmas of Hinduism with social and political conservatism.<sup>6</sup> It was in contrast to this trend, conservative in its essence and radical in form, that the 'extremists' put forth their radical ideas, using in many respects the archaised language of Vedantic concepts. In the works of Tilak and Ghosh though, in the early Twentieth century, we find not so much medieval, 'classical' Vedanta as *neo-Vedantism*, which arose and took shape in the course of development of Indian philosophy in the nineteenth century (from Rammohun Roy to Vivekananda).<sup>7</sup>

This special stage, marking a turning point in the history of Indian philosophy and social thought, is usually called, specially in India, philosophical 'renaissance'; and the Indian historians of philosophy often draw an analogy between the ideological aspirations of the founders of the Indian and those of the European Renaissance. This period in the history of Indian culture in general and philosophy in particular is frequently compared also with European Reformation and Enlightenment.<sup>8</sup> All these comparisons are not without adequate grounds: the progressive Indian thought of the nineteenth century was indeed 'laden' with formative spiritual traits, which in Europe were chronologically and essentially different

from each other. What in Europe constituted a series of cultural-historical periods, was in India the sum total of intertwining tendencies within the confines of the same period.

#### HUMANIST RENAISSANCE

We shall take a little closer look into these. What was the first of these aforesaid tendencies, viz. the humanist-renaissance tendency, like and how far is its analogy here with European Renaissance correct? Speaking in general, the insistence of the Indian authors to draw this analogy is quite understandable. The advanced Indian philosophers of the last century themselves often emphasized their closeness to the thinkers of the European Renaissance. Thus, Rammohun Roy, in the struggle against scholastics, turns to the ideas of such a thinker as Francis Bacon, climaxing the great traditions of the Renaissance; Isvarchandra Vidyasagar publishes the book *The Great Europeans* in which he talks of Bruno, Galileo and Copernicus; the author of the patriotic hymn '*Bande Mataram*', Bankimchandra Chatterjee, considers Renaissance as the period of greatest harmony with his own thinking, and with the thinking of other advanced Indians.<sup>9</sup>

But the question here is not only (and even not so much) of such instances. The point is that the advanced Indian thought of the nineteenth century indeed affirmed a new attitude to the masterpieces of classical antiquity. The medieval thinkers turned to them mainly through the long chain of preceding tradition. But the thinkers of the nineteenth century strove, above all, to turn to these masterpieces *directly*, bypassing the medieval stratification. And though the various types formulated of the Vedanta did, of course, virtually influence and could not but influence them, these types came to be assimilated not simply on the strength of their authority and not without an independent reference to the sources. Such reference was not, however, an end in itself. Like in Europe, it was used for criticizing the outdated medieval dogmas, customs, concepts, for interpretation of the place of man in

world and in society, and for advancing to the foreground new non-traditional values. Again, as in Europe, the issue here was essentially of confrontation between the feudal and the emerging bourgeois ideology.

Of course, all these similar looking features of the European and the Indian renaissance, do by no means exclude the substantial differences between them. First, the Indian bourgeoisie had to assert itself in the struggle not only against the feudal powers but also against the foreign capital. And therefore turning to the heritage of the past 'filled with glory' also had another purpose here, viz. giving a rebuff to attempts being made from the Europo-centrist positions to denigrate the role of this heritage. Secondly, unlike the thinkers of the European renaissance, the nineteenth century Indian philosophers were concerned not only with ancient masterpieces and their medieval interpretations but also with the bourgeois ideology already developed in the countries of Europe. Their attitude to it was, however, to a great extent full of contradictions: on the one hand, it was an effective ally in the struggle against feudal ideas (and this was most important, for instance, for Roy), and on the other, this kind of ideology was often perceived as something alien, injected from outside for weakening national traditions and for 'spiritual enslavement' of the Indians (and this motif is most forceful in Dayananda). Thirdly, the 'spiritual distance' between the classical antiquity and the medieval period in India was far lesser than in Europe, and the 'turning to sources' here (no matter how radical its real aims were), in due form, more frequently did not appear so unorthodox.<sup>10</sup>

All these circumstances left a deep imprint on the philosophy of Indian renaissance. Here virtually there was no so serious independent development of methodology of scientific study of nature—in this, the European philosophy had gone much ahead—and this was not the most pressing question for the nineteenth-century Indian thinkers. Characteristic here were also not the really original naturo-philosophical formulations:

mainly the ancient Indian teachings of naturalist character were revived (and partly 'modernized' in the light of the data of European science), and a no less important task in the conditions of those days was also the upholding of the thesis that perception of nature was not something unusual for Indian culture. However, in so far as the majority of the eminent Indian thinkers of this period were Vedantists, the respective naturalist teachings were found often assimilated within the framework of Vedantic idealism.<sup>11</sup> In itself this was not, of course, anything new. What was new were the purposes of such assimilation (attempt to bring Vedanta 'closer to' or at least to make it 'compatible with' the knowledge of natural science through partly modernized naturalistic schemes) and its range (various Vedantist-minded thinkers of Indian renaissance virtually 'assimilate' all the three main conceptions of the structure of matter in ancient Indian philosophy—the archaic-elemental, 'continuous' and discreet).<sup>12</sup>

The novelty, and in many ways the unorthodox nature of the views of the eminent representatives of the nineteenth century progressive Indian thought was manifest in the approach to the *problem of mān*, their key problem (bringing of this problem to the forefront was, in a certain sense, analogous to the stress on the series of *adhyatmas* in the Upanishads).<sup>13</sup> Solving just this problem, these thinkers came out with a number of ideas radically opposed to the medieval outlook. Thus, the idea of equality (or, at least, of relativity of differences amongst peoples) was contrasted to the idea of social hierarchy; the ideas of freedom to the idea of 'programmedness' of man's conduct by his position in the system of castes; the ideas of social activity to quietism; the idea of importance of 'worldly comforts' to the ascetic ideal.

All these ideas, fairly radical in their essence, appeared as a rule, in a religious garb. True, the traditional Hinduism did not properly conform to them. And here we encounter the second most important tendency manifest in the history of the nineteenth century progressive Indian thought, namely

the *reformist* tendency. The most eminent Indian philosophers of this period were also at the same time the founders of reformist-type religious organizations: Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) of Brahmo Samaj; Dayananda (1824-1883) of Arya Samaj; Vivekananda (1863-1902) of the Ramakrishna Mission. In theory and practice these organizations had a great deal common with the theory and practice of Protestantism at the dawn of its origin—the simplification of the cult; restricting of the rights of the ministers of religion; the shifting of the accent on personal relationship of man to God and not through the mediacy of the church. Their influence on mass consciousness was largely indirect. The fact is that these Samajas associated their plans and hopes with the revival of the past grandeur of India, so much so that their ideology was often linked with the ideology of the national liberation movement. Important in the nineteenth century conditions in India was the 'raising of religion to the rank of ideological banner by patriot-democrats'.<sup>14</sup> And it was this link that conditioned the fairly wide popularity of 'neo-Hinduist' ideas (in spite of a comparatively small number of members of the Samajas).

The reformist tendency was from the very beginning intertwined in India with the tendency of *enlightenment*. In the ultimate end the familiarity with the ideas of European enlightenment left the most profound mark on this entire work of the first Indian philosopher of the new times—Rammohun Roy. The faith in the great 'cleansing' and 'liberating' role of reason and science became the characteristic feature of the outlook of the majority of the vanguard thinkers of India of this period. All of them saw in the wide dissemination of knowledge the radical means of struggle against hunger, diseases, prejudices, and barbarian customs inherited from the medieval times. But here enlightenment was for them usually fully compatible with religion—true 'cleansed' and 'rationalized'. And this 'rationalized' religion was also, in their view, called upon to play a special historical role. Depending upon how the illusions of enlightenment were destroyed in Europe,

and how the 'empire of reason' coming before the keen insight of the enlighteners turned out to be nothing else but an 'idealized empire of the bourgeoisie',<sup>15</sup> the utopian idea that the 'cleansed' Hinduism would, after the changes in the traditional structure of society, supposedly make it possible for the Indian people to avoid the failures and vices of the 'European civilization' becomes all the more prevalent in India.

#### TENDENCIES IN EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY

Such in general form were the main tendencies in the development of nineteenth century European philosophy that exercised a substantial influence on the shaping of neo-Vedantism. Their concrete manifestations, however, were fairly varied, and here one must bear in mind at least three facts. First, these tendencies did not at all appear together in all the cases. To take the most eminent of the nineteenth century thinkers of India, the said tendencies appeared in their work in full measure only in the beginning (Rammohun Roy) and in the end of the period being surveyed by us. In Dayananda the reformist and enlightenment tendencies can be traced with almost no shadow of doubt, but these are intertwined with elements of revivalism, and with attempts to restore the archaized precepts and customs of the Vedic times. In Ramakrishna the motif of enlightenment is completely absent. But in his disciple Vivekananda all the three main tendencies again come to the fore, and that too with the greatest (in any case, amongst the Vedanta-oriented thinkers) force.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, the said tendencies existed not simply side by side; these intertwined with and inter-influenced each other, at times in a most wonderful way. A striking illustration of this can be seen in Vivekananda's utopian project of liquidation of illiteracy in India, of universal education (including popular exposition of the principles of knowledge of modern natural science) with the help of...an order of wandering monks—sannyasis!<sup>17</sup> Thirdly, the nature of manifestation of the said tendencies considerably changed at various stages of development of

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philosophical thought in the nineteenth century India.<sup>18</sup> These stages can be charted out, taking into account such factors as social-economic development of the country (the crisis of feudalism manifested already in the first half of the century, and the growth of capitalist structure revealed more distinctly in the second),<sup>19</sup> change in the methods of colonial administration, and lastly, the development of national liberation movement and the formation of a bourgeois-nationalistic opposition.

The views of the Indian thinkers of this century showed an anti-feudal trend from the very beginning. But the extent of their opposition to the colonial regime was different: at first the unseemly role of this regime in supporting the feudal structure was just not realized by them (although there were clashes with the regime on individual questions); then there occurred the theoretical and lastly practically political split of the Anglophile and the anti-English placings in the then developing and strengthening bourgeois ideology.

## BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY

Taking all this into account, we may speak first of the early period of development of bourgeois ideology in India (beginning with Rammohun Roy and the Brahmo Samaj established by him) when the opposition to feudal ideas and structures is accompanied by an overt turning to European ideas and structures, by a search for allies in Europe and England. At the same time, this turning for help, in such kind of struggle, to colonial powers gradually leads to loss of many illusions about the civilizing role of England, in so far as the said powers sought to depend upon the retrograde forces of the Indian society and to 'keep on preserving' the outdated social institutions.

Further, after the suppression of the 1857-1858 uprising, in the conditions of intensification of colonial exploitation and plantation (according to Macaulay's recipe) of the so-called Anglo-Indian strata,<sup>20</sup> there set in the second stage in the

development of bourgeois philosophy and socio-political thought in India, when the theoretical polarization of the Anglophile and anti-English currents took place. In the Vedantist philosophy, a sharply expressed anti-English orientation was the characteristic for Dayananda and the Arya Samaj established by him.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, the nineties ushered in the third stage in the history of Indian philosophical thought, when philosophy (including Vedanta) turned out to be directly involved in the sphere of liberation struggle and associated with the demarcation of the liberal and the radical-democratic wings of the Indian National Congress.

It is interesting that various parts of Vedantist heritage came to the forefront at different stages. At the first stage, Roy turns primarily to the Upanishads; at the second, Dayananda to the Vedas,<sup>22</sup> and at the third Tilak (after Vivekananda)—to the *Gita*. Thus 'the circle is completed'; the most important religious-philosophical monuments of Hinduism become involved and re-interpreted.

What was it that concretely lay beneath this appeal?

Roy turned to the Upanishads in the context at least of three main objectives. First, he was attracted by the polemics against ritualism, by the denigration of the role of former Vedic deities (in Roy this reached its 'logical limit', that is, zero), by the stress on the one divine source *Brahman*, in other words, on what conformed most directly to the reformist activity of Roy himself. And hence the fillip against polytheism and idol worship in the introductions to translations made by him of the *Mundaka* and *Katha Upanishads*.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, Roy imagined that in the form of conception of *Brahman* in the Upanishads he had before him a teaching agreeing most with the requirements of reason<sup>24</sup> (that is, with the need for enlightenment, for freedom from the power of prejudices, superstitions, centuries-old confusions etc., as advocated by him). And here Roy depended upon absolutisation, though found in the Upanishads, but not at all taken to the end there, of movement from mythology to philosophy (from 'myth' to 'logos'). Lastly,



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that is, thirdly, Roy was impressed by the anti-*Brahman* motifs of the Upanishads where at times women or *Sudras* appear in the role of knowers of *Brahman*. It is not just incidentally that Roy sharply criticized the caste system in his introduction to the translation of *Kena*.<sup>25</sup> Roy himself was a firm champion of liquidation of castes, of assertion of equality of all peoples irrespective of sex or status. The new, humanist understanding of man, in Roy contrasted with the old, mediaeval notion, though not only in this sense. Thus, Roy was the principled opponent of quietism and passivism dominant in the ideology of the late mediaeval period. And here he found for himself allies in the classical heritage. It is not by chance that Roy translated one of the most vital Upanishads, preaching the synthesis of knowledge and action (a precursor, in this sense, of the *Bhagavadgita* !)—viz. the *Isha Upanishad*.<sup>26</sup>

## RETURN TO RELIGION OF THE ARYAS

Dayananda's concern with the Vedas was of a somewhat different nature. Dayananda was firmly opposed to abstractly universal, 'de-individualized' (and from his viewpoint, 'lifeless') religion of the Brahmoists. The coming closer to 'competitors' of Hinduism (particularly to Christianity, which was characteristic for some leaders of the Brahmo Samaj), the going away of the refined reformist minority from the masses,<sup>27</sup> and its growing 'Europeanization'—all these were for Dayananda an evidence of harmfulness of Brahmoism. As an alternative, he gave a call for returning to the 'religion of the Aryas' with its specific rituals taken from the *sruti*. In Dayananda's main work *The Light of Truth*, we find a detailed exposition of these rituals, including the description of the implements used for offering sacrifices.<sup>28</sup> Described in still greater detail are the writs and rites associated with the four *ashramas* and 'accompanying' the adherents of the 'religion of the Aryas' throughout the whole life. All this was in striking contrast to anti-ritualism so typical of Roy (and in many ways, also of the thinkers of the Upanishads). This movement from *jnana-kanda* to *karma-kanda* is, at

least in form, completely opposed to Roy's aspirations, leading at the same time to return from those strata of the Vedic complex which conceived 'logos', to the strata dominated by myth.

But the matter was not that simple. Both the enlightenment and the reformist tendencies also appeared in their own way in Dayananda. And this became possible with the help of 'modernized' interpretation of its own kind of the Vedas. Thus, Dayananda categorically denied the presence of polytheism even in the earliest strata of the Vedic complex. From his point of view the hymns of the Vedas preach from the beginning to the end consistent and strictest monotheism. As regards the names of numerous deities mentioned there, these, according to Dayananda, are simply epithets of one god.<sup>29</sup> For establishing his thesis, Dayananda puts forth, first, arguments of etymological nature, showing the relationship of the said names to various functions. The mainly functional treatment of the deities was really typical of Vedic religion, but this then did not in any way exclude the notion of various bearers of these functions. Secondly, Dayananda reiterated the famous formula of the hymn of *Dirghatamas* (*RV*, I, 164, 46) about the 'single essence' (*ekam sad*) underlying the various names of the gods.<sup>30</sup> In the present case, the tendency (as we see, of pantheistic type) is passed on as the original fact (interpreted here in the spirit of monotheism). In reality, the supra-polytheistic notions about *Isvara*, the theistic interpretation of *Brahman* etc., are characteristic of the later and not the earlier strata of the Vedic complex.<sup>31</sup>

Whatever the case, armed with interpretations of this kind, Dayananda supported most decisively the 'cleansing' of Hinduism from polytheistic notions (taken root, in his view, under the influence of the Puranas), from idol worship, superstitions and 'miracles', prejudices, introduced by the priests in their selfish interests etc.<sup>32</sup> Completely in Roy's spirit, Dayananda declared idol worship not as a ladder leading to higher religious conceptions, but a 'bottomless pit'.<sup>33</sup> Fully in Roy's

spirit he also enumerated the numerous moral, religious, hygienic and even politically (the weakening of the nation because of useless fights) damaging consequences of polytheism and idol worship dominating in India.<sup>34</sup>

With the help of a modernized approach to the Vedas, Dayananda strove to conform his position also to the enlightening tendency in the Indian thought of which he undoubtedly was a protagonist, by advocating the need for universal (for all the *varnas*) education, including also the knowledge of natural sciences.<sup>35</sup> Here, he did not restrict himself to the statement that 'all Vedic principles are compatible with science'.<sup>36</sup> He instead strove (after Madhava) to represent the Vedas as the source of all knowledge, thereby also stressing the knowledge of natural science. As a result, the very meaning of the Vedic rituals was interpreted in an extremely odd and unexpected way. Thus, the sacrificial offering of *soma* seemed to be meant for . . . curing infectious diseases.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the Vedic *rishis*, according to Dayananda, already knew not only fire weapons but also telegraph, electricity, heat, energy etc.<sup>38</sup>

All this had extremely different connotations. On the one hand, Dayananda in his own way opposed the Europo-centrist ideas about the initial harm done to ancient Indian culture (in the ultimate count, the ideas of natural science—advanced for their time—were indeed there in the Vedangas and Upavedas). On the other hand, his position was the position of Asia centrism (or, still more correctly, Indo-centrism). The Vedas, from this point of view, were the real source of all human culture. This Indo-centrism of Dayananda did not remain without its followers in the twentieth century. To quote Aurobindo Ghosh, 'Dayananda asserts that the truths of modern knowledge of natural science can be found in the Vedic hymns. . . . To this I would like to add that, in my conviction, the Vedas contain also a number of such truths which modern science is still not aware of.'<sup>39</sup>

Even in Dayananda's teachings about the rules regulating the conduct of the members of the *varnas* at various stages

(*ashramas*) of their path of life, there is at times 'new wine' put in 'old bottles'. And here one finds thoughts, though in a different context, concurring with those of Roy. Thus, the idealization of *varnas* (treated in the form of non-hereditary associations, formed on the principle of display of capabilities in the course of universal education) was employed for the criticism of the really existing hereditary system of castes. Exactly in the same way, the ancient system of the four aims in life and the *ashramas* was contrasted with the exaggeration, during the medieval period, of the role of the last *ashrama* (*sannyasa*) and the last aim of life (*moksha*). Dayananda's anti-quietism was expressed not only in declaring the stage of *grihastha* (householder) as the basis of all the others and in this sense the 'highest', but also in declaring the need for engaging in socially useful work even at the stage of *sannyasa*.<sup>40</sup> In the political field, the formulas taken from Manu's *Dharma-sastras* and Kautilay's *Arthashastra* were often used by Dayananda for defending, essentially, the bourgeois political ideas—such, for example, as the division of powers, constitutional restrictions on prerogatives of royal power etc.<sup>41</sup> But the most noteworthy were Dayananda's statements in favour of independence of India.<sup>42</sup> It was not merely chance that some prominent participants of the liberation struggle, including one of the leaders of the 'extremists', Lala Lajpat Raj, came from the midst of the Arya Samaj.

Despite all this, much in Dayananda's teaching clearly did not conform to the pressing tasks of the national liberation movement (the 'militant Hinduism' was, in no way, of any help to the unification of the representatives of various faiths; the turning to archaic institutions and 'esoteric' interpretations of the subtleties of the Vedas—despite the view of Dayananda himself—also could not in any way be an effective means of awakening national self-consciousness etc.).

#### UNIVERSAL RELIGION OF VIVEKANANDA

The third stage in the evolution of Indian philosophical

thought of the new times was, as stated earlier, marked by a slant towards the *Bhagavadgita*. First, this part of the Vedantist 'triple principle'—'*smṛiti prasthāna*' never had an esoteric character. With the help of its set aphorisms and images which have become a part of universal culture, it was possible to appeal not only to reason but also to the hearts of millions of inhabitants of India. Secondly, the recourse to this poem made it possible to approach the problem of religious reformation from a new angle. Essentially following in many ways the *Gita* itself,<sup>43</sup> in Vivekananda, towards the end of the century, put-forth his theory of 'universal religion', making it feasible to achieve a synthesis between reformatory ideas of Roy and Dayananda. While there was in Roy a 'distillation' of its own kind of religious ideas and a rejection of the majority of the specific features of Hinduism, and in Dayananda 'militant Hinduism', in Vivekananda there was an attempt to identify a common basis of religions, preserving (but at the same time also relativizing) the concrete forms of religious worship. And this conformed, on the one hand, to the needs of the fight against religious intolerance and inter-community differences, and on the other, to the urge to depend upon native and not 'imported' religious traditions. Thirdly, the recourse to the *Gita* was an extremely convenient form of displaying humanist ideas in the Indian philosophy of the new times. It is characteristic that unlike the mediaeval commentators contesting the primacy of *jñāna-mārga* (Sankara) and *bhakti-mārga* (Ramanuja and Madhva), Vivekananda (and after him Tilak) identifies the 'path of action'—*karma-mārga*. The antiquietism noted in Roy's commentaries on *Isha Upanishad*, manifesting itself in the background of the archaised scheme of rituals in Dayananda, becomes more distinctly perceptible here. Vivekananda's lectures devoted to *karma-yoga*<sup>44</sup> are, in this sense, of very great interest. Here action is seen not in the limits of the opposition 'external'—'internal' ritual,<sup>45</sup> but from the point of view of its significance for man's 'self-expression', for the formation of his character, and for development of correct mutual relations with

other people etc. It is, for instance, interesting that the concepts of '*pravritti*' and '*nivritti*',—which for the medieval commentators meant usually the opposition of 'revolving away' from and 'revolving towards' activity,—meant for Vivekananda egoistic and egocentric action on the one hand, and a rejection on egocentrism on the other.<sup>46</sup> The further judgments on a man's worth had, with all their abstractness, essentially an *anti-feudal* trend. And a striking illustration of this can be found in the turning to the unorthodox '*anti-Brahmana*' legends.<sup>47</sup> Lastly, viz. fourthly, the problems of the *Gita* included also such questions as the conflict between historically different value orientations, the correlation between the personal and social ideal, the admissibility of force for just purposes etc. And all this made it possible to associate the interpretation of its teaching with the pressing socio-political tasks. Such an association, partly observed already in Vivekananda,<sup>48</sup> came to light in full measure in the early twentieth century (in the works of Tilak, Aurobindo, and later of Gandhi).

Although such a concluding chain of *prasthanas* *traya*, or *Brahma-sutra*, did not become the subject of direct study by eminent philosophers of India of the new times, the pioneering ideas of various Vedantist schools again appear before us in the nineteenth century. It is interesting to note here that all the three main trends formed in the course of the preceding development of Vedanta were now revived. Thus, Rammohun Roy, defending the conception according to which *Brahman* is endowed with infinite attributes (*saguna*) and is related to nature and individual beings as their 'inspiring' and 'controlling' factor, is essentially close to the position of *visistadvaita*.<sup>49</sup> Dayananda (in any case, in a later edition of *The Light of Truth*) clearly holds the positions of *dvaita*-Vedanta. *Brahman* is treated by him only as an operational cause of the world; it is matter (*prakriti*)<sup>50</sup> that is accepted as the material cause.

Lastly, Vivekananda expresses his agreement with the three main positions of *advaita*: about the uncertain (*nirguna*) and 'all-excluding' (*nisprapanca*) *Brahman* as actual reality,

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about 'non-reality' of the world of variable and heterogenous things, and lastly about the profound agreement of the individual and the world soul.

### PRACTICAL VEDANTA

It is not difficult to notice that the nineteenth century trends mentioned above move in an order, reverse to their historical origin: *advaita*, shaped earlier than others, appears last,—mainly in the end of the century. This was not just a chance. The dominant position of the given system in the later medieval period conditioned its distinctive identification with Hinduist orthodoxy (and with the related negative consequences). Such an identification was typical already of Roy.<sup>52</sup> And only in the end of the century, in the so-called *practical Vedanta* of Vivekananda, do the historically existing possibilities of interpretation of *advaita* in a spirit, different from the religious orthodoxy, surface to the fore. One cannot but also notice that the main Vedantist trends of the nineteenth century appear in far less distinct, seemingly 'diluted' form, compared with their historical prototypes. Here, there is neither the filigreed development of categorical apparatus characteristic of the medieval period, nor the painstaking justification of the reasons for the split with the competing trends. But it is just this uncertainty that enables us to see much of the specific nature of Vedantist teachings of the new times. There are many reasons underlying this sometimes deliberate amorphousness; and here also is the lack of desire to reproduce the concrete form of Vedantist formulations of the medieval period, and the tendency not to 'make rigid' the sectarian arguments,<sup>53</sup> and to 'change over' to the development of ethical-psychological and social aspects of Vedanta associated with historical requirements.

### TEACHINGS OF RAMAKRISHNA

The acceptance of the special role of such type of Vedantism as *bheda-abheda-vada* is further characteristic of the evolution of

the Vedantist thought in the 19th century. Its influence is most distinctly felt in the teachings of Ramakrishna. It is generally not easy to reconstruct the essence of this teachings, expressed mainly in the form of parables and aporisms and recorded not by the thinker himself but by his disciples. At the first glance, it seems largely to be a popular exposition of *advaita*. In fact, we also find here references to the indefinite (*nirguna*), indescribable (*anirvacaniya*) nature of *Brahman*, and to *maya* which 'obscures' and hides the face of actual reality, and to the ultimate absorption of the individual by the world consciousness.<sup>54</sup> But on a close scrutiny, the teachings of Ramakrishna reveal a number of substantial differences from *advaita*, which bring it nearer rather to such thinkers as Bhaskara and Yadavaprakasa. First, the *Brahman* endowed with form is here declared as much real and true as also without it.<sup>55</sup> Secondly, the sphere of the variably-diverse, born of 'divine play' (*lila*) is by no means illusory. According to Ramakrishna, *lila* is as real as *nitya* (invariable, absolute), though it is a derivative in relation to it.<sup>56</sup> Thirdly, the 'non-reality' of the world is spoken of in the sense of its dependence on the absolute and variability.<sup>57</sup> The *maya*, according to Ramakrishna, is just what obscures these aspects; and it is in him (unlike Sankara) essentially subordinated to *lila* (and at times even reduced to this latter).<sup>58</sup> As a result, Ramakrishna compares his teaching with a fruit in which it is not only the kernel ('seed') that is important but what surrounds it, and also with a ladder leading not only to the roof of the hut but also down from it.<sup>59</sup> He meaningfully shows the need for passing through the 'way down' along with the 'way up'; a similar argument we find in the opponents of *vivarta*, beginning with Bhaskara.

Here Ramakrishna is by no means alone in his sympathies for *bhedabheda*. In fact, we find this teaching about the real development of the world from the initially undifferentiated *Brahman* in early works of Dayananda.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, a resemblance with the views of Bhaskara and Yadavaprakasa can be found also in some treatments of *maya* in Vivekananda.<sup>61</sup> All



this follows a definite law. Just as *bhedabheda* was historically the form of deviation from *advaita* illusionism, it often performs the very same function also in the new times.

And here we can notice the third characteristic feature of development of Vedantist thought in the nineteenth century, namely, the dominance, in progressive Vedantist-thinkers,<sup>62</sup> of the tendency of acceptance of the *reality* of the world. True, the arsenal of theoretical means used for the criticism of *mayavada* did not expand so considerably compared with the arguments of the 'classical' opponents of Sankara. Thus, in Dayananda, there was essentially a repetition of the already familiar arguments of Ramanuja ('reproduced' also in Madhva) about the difficulty of 'reconciling' the concepts of *maya* and *Brahman*.<sup>63</sup> Exactly in the same way, a denial of illusionism did not by any means imply here (as also in classical Vedantist opponents of Sankara) a denial of idealism.

Nonetheless, the main tendency was extremely important. The main point here was that of the *motifs* of deviation from *mayavada*. The *advaita*, as precisely expressed by one of its modern followers, R. V. Brook, was, we know, not simply a theoretical (sublation) but also axiological (sublation<sup>64</sup>) 'taking down' of the world. And it was just against this depreciation of the world that the leading Indian thinkers of the nineteenth century, including the representatives of the neo-Vedantism taking shape, objected. It is just this motif which we see already in Roy, who stressed the harmfulness of *mayavada* from the point of view of the education of the Indians in the spirit of responsibility for the destiny of the country.<sup>65</sup> It is also characteristic that even the advaitist-oriented thinkers (Vivekananda, Tilak) accepted the extraordinary skill of Sankara in interpreting the *Gita*, and regard first and foremost not *jnana* but *karma-yoga*. The problem of Buddhism' of Sankara in its medieval treatment lost its force in a considerable measure. The fact is that departure from religious orthodoxy generally became the dominant tradition amongst the progressive thinkers of India.

## RADICAL UNORTHODOXY

This more or less radical unorthodoxy, departure from century-old traditions, is the fourth characteristic feature of the neo-Vedantism conceived. The *departure from orthodoxy* (in the form in which it appeared not only in the religious practice but also authoritative commentaries on *Brahma-sutra*) took varied forms. If we begin from the point that *suprapolytheism* was characteristic for all (without exception) mediaeval commentators of the *Brahma-sutra*, it would by no means be *anti*-polytheism. Even in Sankara (as we see)—at the level of *vyavaharika*—the deities of traditional pantheon are not more, but also not less, real than the remaining beings (including people)<sup>66</sup>. In Roy we already have just anti-polytheism. The same may be said also about Dayananda, who followed *Madhva* in the overall ontological scheme but did by no means share his conviction in the existence of the hierarchy of gods. And although Roy and Vivekananda seem formally to be in contrast in as much as the former literally opposed the attempts to obscure the presence of polytheism in the religious practice of the Indians by his references to 'symbolicity' of gods and the latter loudly declared that 'there was no polytheism in India!'<sup>67</sup> essentially both of them expressed in their own way one tendency: the former, of directly denying the Hindu pantheon, the latter, of 'relativizing' it and reducing it to pure symbolism. A further characteristic of a number of representatives of neo-Vedantism taking shape was the *minimalization* of its own kind of religious ideas. This was most characteristic for Roy, denying even the most fundamental traditional dogma of *karma*. But, though in a small measure, the same tendency was, if may be said, also there in Vivekananda, who had an extremely ironical attitude to the traditional notions of paradise, hell, miracles etc.<sup>68</sup> This was in sharp contrast to the works of all major Vedantists of the mediaeval times—from Sankara to Madhva. Highly characteristic were also the changes taking place in the nineteenth century Vedanta in the correlation of such sources of knowledge

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(*praman*) as *reason* and *sruti*. While for the classical Vedantists *sruti* was the only source of knowledge about the basis of the world—*Brahman*,—and reason could at best play there only an auxiliary role,<sup>69</sup> the nineteenth century thinkers of Vedantist orientation, gave 'reason' a new meaning in comprehending the essence of the world. Already in Roy, generally accepting the authority of the *sruti*, it is nonetheless asserted that it is possible to arrive at the concept of deity (*Brahman*) 'on the basis of correct influence.'<sup>70</sup> In Vivekananda, along with the dilation of the full force of reason, we also see an explication of its own kind of substantial changes occurring in respect of *sruti* in advanced Indian thought of the nineteenth century. It was Vivekananda precisely who opposed Sankara (as also other chief representatives of Vedanta) by denying the eternalness of the Vedas (from his point of view, the 'eternal' is only what is true in them, like the 'eternalness' of the laws of science), their infallibility, self-authenticity<sup>71</sup> But this essentially destroyed the complex system of 'guarded measures' (as we have already seen) so conscientiously developed by Sankara for bringing out strict harmony between *Advaita* and orthodoxy. On the other hand, this was well related to the general tendency of enlightenment (also humanist, as we shall further see) in the development of Indian philosophical thought of this period.

## TEACHINGS OF HINDUISM

Unlike the medieval commentators of the *Brahma-sutra*, the nineteenth century Vedantists cannot be associated directly with any traditional teaching in Hinduism. The closeness to ideas of Ramanuja in Roy or of Madhva in Dayananda does not of course, make them Vishnuites, exactly in the same way as Advaitism of Vivekananda does not lead him to Saivism. A rejection of confessional theological arrangements, closely inter-woven in Vedanta with philosophical schemes proper, as we see, mitigates the sharpness of their contradiction.

## ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS

The attempt at *synthesis* of various kinds of Vedanta is the fifth characteristic feature of neo-Vedantism in the making. Thus, Ramakrishna believes already that the three main types of Vedanta reflect the various stages of yogic experience, and Vivekananda even affirms that finding of unity in these three types is one of the main tasks of his life.<sup>72</sup> From his point of view, all these are stages, so to say, in attaining the absolute and simultaneously in the evolution of religious consciousness. This is how the teaching about the unity of 'circle' of religions is concretized: *Advaita* is here a sort of an imagined ideal centre of the said 'circle', *Advaita* and *visista-Advaita* are the steps on the way to it. It is on these steps that Vivekananda 'arranges' such religions as Judaism and Islam, Christianity, and lastly Hinduism.<sup>73</sup> But the 'combination' of the types of Vedanta was associated not simply with the attempt to solve (true, by purely utopian means) the pressing problem in the then India of getting over religious-community clashes. It made it feasible also to synthesize a number of valuable (from the point of view of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda) 'practical' tendencies which were characteristic of the trends of Vedanta, oppositional in relation to *Advaita*. The sixth characteristic feature of neo-Vedantism taking shape was just the special attention paid to ethical-psychological and social implications of Vedantist theories. And highly characteristic in this sense was the fact that Vivekananda called his teaching *practical Vedanta*.<sup>74</sup> Of course, the traditional Vedanta too was in its own way 'practical', that is, oriented to the building up of definite precepts for life. But in its medieval, scholastic form it was a bit too esoteric. Characteristic of the nineteenth century was the tendency (from Roy's popular translations of the Upanishads and Ramakrishna's talks to the speeches of Vivekananda) just to make Vedanta widely accessible. And Vivekananda takes this tendency to its logical end when he says: 'We shall beat in all hearths, in all markets, at the heights of hills and in in plains, the drum of *Advaita*'.<sup>75</sup>

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But the question, of course, was not only of popularization of *Advaita*. After other progressive thinkers of India Vivekananda strove to 'bring down' the ideals of Vedanta from the heights of scholastic theoretization to the earth and thus democratize them. He was characteristically against the application of the *Advaita* theory of levels in social-ethical plane (at the level of *parmarthika*—equality, at the level of *vyavaharika*—hierarchy), and called the followers of such method (so typical for Sankara !) of defending the existing inequality as 'Pharisees of Hinduism'.<sup>76</sup> From the point of view of Vivekananda himself, the acceptance of spiritual universal oneness leads first to a principal denial of all privileges. He regards the latter as the greatest obstacles in the path of progress of mankind.<sup>77</sup> A denial of privileges (obligatory for 'practical' Vedantist), according to Vivekananda, leads to maximum possible (although not also to absolute, not 'mechanical', not exclusive of differences) quality. From the acceptance of spiritual universal oneness conclusions are also drawn about the need for freedom (including also in society, which suggests rejection of outlived traditions, obstructing 'self-revelation' of peoples) and for fraternity.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the great slogans born in the course of anti-feudal revolutions in Europe are essentially rendered in the language of Vedanta.<sup>79</sup>

## CONCEPT OF KARMA

The seventh characteristic feature of the emerging neo-Vedantism was the marked tendency of new interpretation of a number of traditional notions. In the past, as we have seen, the teaching about *karma* was usually employed for apologetic objectives. To Vivekananda this was principally not acceptable.<sup>80</sup> He was opposed to fatalistic treatment of *Karma*, particularly to the preaching that the poor position of the Indian people was pre-ordained. Vivekananda wrote about *karma* above all as the law of relationship not so much of the present to the past as of the present to the future: '*Karma* is what presupposes the capacity and the strength to transform what is

being formed.”<sup>81</sup> The stressing of the significance of human projects (and here not only personal but also social) is the most characteristic feature of the understanding of *karma* in Vivekananda’s ‘practical Vedanta’.<sup>82</sup>

#### CONCEPT OF MOKSHA

The concept of *moksha* also undergoes a characteristic change; Vivekananda treats it not as an individual but as a collective ‘liberation’, attained at a definite stage of evolution of society. This enabled Vivekananda to raise the question of the need not only of ‘inner’ but also ‘outer’, not only individual but also social premises for achieving the ideal set by him. These included also the creation of minimum of material conditions making it possible for the masses to avoid hunger, poverty and disease and thereby assist the awakening of spiritual interests in them. In India, in the words of Vivekananda, there is ‘neither *bhoga* (gratification of needs) nor *yoga* (renunciation)’. When one is satiated with *bhoga*, then it is that one will...understand [and love the beauty of] the teachings on *yoga*’.<sup>83</sup>

The concept of *samsara* as aimless and meaningless ‘rotation’ of souls also essentially undergoes a change. True, Vivekananda gives this traditional meaning of the concept its due, comparing at times the attempts at improving the society with futile attempts to ‘straighten a dog’s tail’.<sup>84</sup> And, nonetheless, the ideal of ‘universal liberation’ put forth by Vivekananda in as much as it was regarded as realizable in principle, made him introduce substantial correctives in the traditional concept of *samsara* in its application to human history: he started expressing himself in favour of acceptance of the possibility of social progress on global scales.<sup>85</sup>

All the characteristics enumerated here, emerging in the course of formation of neo-Vedantism, conditioned in many ways its further modification and trend of development. The outcome of the growing link of the neo-Vedantist tradition with concrete social problems was that, already in the early

twentieth century, Vedanta is found involved in the sphere of politics. Along with the 'politicization' of Vedanta, is observed its peculiar *modernization*. Not only the individual concepts, but also the contours of the Vedantist formulations on the whole undergo a change, particularly under the influence of the assimilation—at least in the idealistic way—of the idea of *progress*. Since both the processes indicated above are directly related to social and spiritual changes in India occurring in the course of her 'clash' against the Western bourgeois civilization, the Indian thinkers raise ever more persistently the problem of correlation of Indian and European civilizations (East and West). Like Buddhism in the medieval times, Vedanta in the new times ceases to be (in theoretical and practical sense) a phenomenon restricted to the boundaries of India. The famous voyage of Vivekananda, across the 'black waters' (*kala pani*) of the ocean, taboo for the orthodox Hindu, to attend the World Congress of Religions, visually symbolizes India's new position in the changed world.

NOTES

1. K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sochineniya* [Works], vol. 9, p. 131.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
3. See I. Reisner, *Ocherki klassovoi bor'by v Indii* [Essays on Class Struggle in India], pt. I, M., 1932, p. 84.
4. K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sochineniya* [Works], vol. 9, pp. 228-29.
5. See *Novaya istorii Indii* [Modern History of India], M., 1961, p. 537.
6. G. H. Forbes, *Positivism in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 37.
7. The term 'neo-Vedantism' has been used by us after the Indian historians of philosophy. See in particular: S. L. Malhotra, *Social and Political Orientations of Neo-Vedantism*, Delhi, 1960.
8. See for example: E. N. Komarov, A. D. Litman, *Mirovozzrenie Mohandas Karamchanda Gandi* [The World Outlook of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi], M., 1969, p. 15; R. B. Rybakov, *Osnovny: cherty burzhuaiznoi reformatsii induizma* [Main Features of Bourgeois Reformation of Hinduism], in *Religii i ateizm v Indii* [Religion and Atheism in India], M., 1960, p. 127.
9. B. Majumdar, *History of Indian Political Thought*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 429; G. K. Mookerjee, *The Indian Image of Nineteenth Century Europe*, London, 1967, p. 24.
10. For a comparison, it is enough to recall the 'de-Christianization' distinctly appearing in the European Renaissance (though incomplete) of Platonism

and Aristotileism. It may be said that the 'crossing' of the two traditions (Greek and Near East) in Europe is *behind* the centuries-old development of one (though, of course, also heterogeneous) tradition in India it is just the reverse.

11. On the revival in India of authentic ancient Indian *naturalism* (*svabhava-vada*) see: A. D. Litman, *Traditsii ofilsofskogo naturalizma v Indii i mirovozzrenie devatmya* [Traditions of Philosophical Naturalism in India and the Outlook of Devatma], M., 1960.
12. We find a favourable attitude to *nyaya-vaisheshika* atomism already in Rammohun Roy (*The English Work of Raja Rammohun Roy*, vol. I, Allahabad, 1906, p. 156; hereafter—EWR. Later, the theory of *atoms as material cause of the world*, along with the *operating cause* (*Brahman*) is defended by Dayananda (Swami Dayananda, *The Light of Truth* [*Satyartha Prakasha*], Allahabad, 1939, p. 295).
13. The difference is in that in the nineteenth century the concrete ethico-psychological and social aspects of the problem of man are far more substantial than the speculative-metaphysical.
14. See *Religii i ateizm v Indii* [Religion and Atheism in India], p. 88.
15. K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sochineniya* [Works], vol. 19, p. 190.
16. See V. S. Kostyuchenko, *Vivekananda* [in Russian], M., 1947, chapter II.
17. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works*, vol. V, vols. I-VIII, Mayavati, 1947-1951, p. 29 (hereafter—VCW).
18. On the change in reformist tendency see: R. B. Rybakov, *Burzhuznaya reformatsiya induizm* [Bourgeois Reformation of Hinduism], M., 1960.
19. See V. V. Brodov, *Indiiskaya filsofiya Novogo vremeni* [Indian Philosophy in Modern Times], M., 1960, pp. 73-8, 94-107; *Novaya istoriya Indii* [Modern History of India], M., 1947, chapters VIII, XI.
20. S. C. Srinivasachari, *Social and Religious Movements in the Nineteenth Century*, Bombay, 1947, p. 39.
21. See *Novaya istoriya Indii* [Modern History of India], pp. 448-49.
22. That is, above all (although not exclusive) to the earliest stratum of Vedic complex (*mantras*).
23. See, for example, EWR, vol. I, pp. 23, 45.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 68.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-77.
27. Cf. Rabindranath Tagore's authentic evidence in his novel *Gora*.
28. Swami Dayananda, *op. cit.*, chapter III.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
31. Dayananda essentially projects the ideas of later Upanishads on *early* hymns.
32. In reality the *Puranas* reflected not the *conception* of polytheistic pantheon at all, but its *transformation* and growing *anthropomorphization*. About Dayananda's support for 'cleansing' of Hinduism see in particular: Swami Dayananda, *op. cit.*, chapter II.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 447.



## CONCEPTION OF NEO-VEDANTISM

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 447-50.
35. *Ibid.*, chapters II-III.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 385.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-5.
38. J. T. F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*, Delhi, 1960, p. 272.
39. Sri Aurobindo, *Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda*, Calcutta, 1947, p. 57.
40. Swami Dayananda, *op. cit.*, pp. 178, 191.
41. *Ibid.*, chapter VI.
42. See *Noraya istoriya Indii* [*Modern History of India*], p. 449.
43. There were, of course, differences too. The *Gita* is concerned with the inner-Indian religious currents, but Vivekananda—with the main world religions too. Unlike the author of the *Gita*, he, in his 'religious synthesis' (as we see later), depends on the system taking shape of the main types of Vedanta.
44. VCW, vol. I, pp. 23-117.
45. Karma means *action* in general, and also ritual, and also the 'fruits' of the deeds done.
46. VCW, vol. I, p. 84.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
48. See V. S. Kostyuchenko, *Vivekananda*, chapter III, § 2.
49. EWR, vol. I, pp. 69, 183, 198. This fact is correctly noted by V. V. Brodov (*op. cit.*, p. 80) and Damodaran (K. Damodaran, *Indian Thought: A Critical Survey*, Bombay, 1960, p. 347).
50. Swami Vivekananda, *op. cit.*, pp. 267, 290 (see also G. P. Upadhyaya, *Philosophy of Dayananda*, Allahabad, 1955, chapter V).
51. VCW, vol. I, p. 419; vol. II, p. 130.
52. EWR, vol. I, p. 473.
53. Vivekananda ironically calls the *disputes* amongst the representatives of various Vedantist teachings 'the bull fights in Benaras' (VCW, vol. III, p. 348).
54. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, NY, 1942, pp. 102, 268, 636; 169, 206, 583; 103, 148.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 217, 636.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 477-78.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 325-26.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 477-78. We shall recall that, for the adherents of *vivarta-* and *parinama-vada*, the correlation of *maya* and *lila* was principally different.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 328, 345, 417-18.
60. J. T. F. Jordens, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-09.
61. See V. S. Kostyuchenko, *Vivekananda*, pp. 112-13.
62. This is rightly noted by V. V. Brodov (*op. cit.*, pp. 80, 110, 139), and by R. B. Rybakov (*op. cit.*, p. 133).
63. Swami Dayananda, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-75. Cf. the criticism of *mayavada* in Ramanuja (chapter 7).
64. *The Problems of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedanta*, Dordrecht, 1960, p. 100.
65. See his famous letter to Lord Amherst about educational reforms (EWR, vol. I, pp. 471-74).

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66. See Sankara's Commentaries on Brahma-sutra.
67. EWR, vol. I, p. 4; VCW, vol. I, p. 13.
68. See V. S. Kostyuchenko, *op. cit.*, chapter II, § 2.
69. See chapter 6.
70. EWR, vol. I, p. 4.
71. See V. S. Kostyuchenko, *op. cit.*, chapter II, § 3.
72. Sister Nivedita, *The Master as I Saw Him*, London, 1910, p. 304.
73. VCW, vol. V, p. 64; vol. VI, p. 88. For criticism of Vivekananda's conception about the hierarchy of religions see V. S. Kostyuchenko, *op. cit.*, chapter II, § 2.
74. VCW, vol. III, p. 427.
75. Quoted from: R. Rolland, *The Universal Gospel of Vivekananda* (Russian edition: R. Rolland's *Collected Works*, vol. 20, M., 1936, p. 26).
76. VCW, vol. V, p. 13.
77. VCW, vol. I, p. 422.
78. VCW, vol. II, p. 297; vol. III, p. 189.
79. In Vivekananda these are at times interpreted in the spirit of utopian socialism. See E. N. Komarov, *Zarozhdenie kritiki burzhua'nogo obshchestva v Indii kontsa XIX v.* [*The Conception of Criticism of Bourgeois Society in India in the late 19th Century*],—in *Ideologicheskie teheniya sovremennoi Indii* [*Ideological Currents in Modern India*], M., 1960.
80. VCW, vol. VIII, p. 184.
81. *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, 1893-1909*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 137.
82. VCW, vol. III, p. 152. For a number of valuable observations on this question see also: R. B. Rybakov, *Interpretatsiya ponyatiya karma v religiozno-filosofskikh trudakh Swami Vivekanandy* [*Interpretation of the Concept of Karma in Religious-Philosophical Works of Swami Vivekananda*],—in *Strany Dal'nego Vostoka i Yugo-Vostochnoi Azii* [*Countries of Far East and South-East Asia*], M., 1960.
83. VCW, vol. V, p. 295. On collective liberation see also the article *Moksha* in the *Filosofskaya entsiklopediya* [*Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*], vol. 3, M., 1960, p. 485.
84. VCW, vol. I, pp. 76-7.
85. See, for instance, VCW, vol. III, p. 269.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—THE GREAT INDIAN HUMANIST, DEMOCRAT AND PATRIOT

DR. E. CHELISHEV

**I**N the autumn of 1956 I happened to be on Cape Comorin, the southern-most edge of India. On a rocky coast, at a spot where the waves of three seas meet, we were fortunate to behold a splendid unforgettable spectacle, the birth of a new day. The first rays of the sun rising from the ocean gilded the cupola-shaped Kanya Kumari temple, the columns of the three-seas temple; they were reflected in the dazzling white walls of the recently erected temple in honour of Mahatma Gandhi. Far out on the sea, like a flock of quaint birds, the sails of light fishing boats dived in and out of the waves, while south of the rocky cape, some 200 metres from the shore rose a lonely cliff, against which the waves noisily beat. 'The cliff of Swami Vivekananda', I was told by a young man standing nearby who evidently understood that I was admiring the majestic beauty of the granite islet. On hearing the name of Vivekananda, about whom I first learned while a student from the works of Romain Rolland, I came up to the young man. 'Yes, it was on this cliff that Swami Vivekananda had spent three days before leaving India and setting out for distant lands', he said. 'How I would like to visit that islet', I remarked. 'Wait a while,' the young man said, 'I will go to the fishing village and get a boat.'

But my desire to step on to Vivekananda's cliff was so great that without waiting for the young man's return I decided to swim to the islet. I was about half way across from the shore to the islet when I noticed a fishing boat in which the young man stood up. He was shouting something and waving his arms. But the wind carried off his words and I could not get the meaning of the signs. We almost simultaneously reached the islet and climbed up along the ledge to the top. 'It is dangerous to swim here'. my volunteer guide

remarked. 'There are big sharks. But all's well that ends well.'

'People say,' he added, 'that Swami Vivekananda swam to the islet: he was a fine athlete.' There was an even platform on the top of the cliff, on which a circle was drawn. My new friend placed a few bananas within it and, sitting down on a rock, said: 'Sit down and think of the one who indicated to us the road to a new life.' I followed his advice. Only the anxious cries of sea gulls and the rumble of the surf broke the silence. . .

#### VIVEKANANDA—THE MESSIAH OF NEW INDIA

Everything I had read about Vivekananda came to my mind. I recalled the words of Tagore that he who wants to understand India must read Vivekananda, that he awakens in the younger generation love for, and devotion to, their motherland, their pride in its past and hope for its bright future. This indeed is so. Reading and re-reading the works of Vivekananda each time I find in them something new that helps deeper to understand India, her philosophy, the way of the life and customs of the people in the past and the present, their dreams of the future.

Perhaps it was there, on the lonely cliff located, as it were, at the foot of India, thinking and praying for the happiness of his people, that Vivekananda repeated his words, filled with unshakable faith in the future of his much suffering motherland, words which today ring out like a prophecy. Vivekananda said that the sun of courage had risen, that his country would inevitably wake up and nothing could prevent that process. India would be in the grip of slumber no more.

I thought of his life, brief but dazzlingly bright, full of indefatigable activity and an impassioned desire to make his compatriots aware of their greatness and lead them on to the road of a new life.

. . . Six years have passed since that unforgettable visit to the Swami Vivekananda cliff. That time has not been wasted. I have come to know Vivekananda more intimately, I have

read many of his works, the studies of Indian scientists dedicated to various aspects of his teaching. I have also met some leaders of the Ramakrishna Mission, particularly Swami Ranganathananda, with whom I have had many interesting and useful conversations both in Delhi and Moscow about the teaching and activities of Vivekananda.

In this article I want to discuss in brief some aspects of world outlook and activities of Vivekananda which, it seems to me, are most in line with the interests of his motherland and arouse in Soviet people deep sympathy and respect.

#### HUMANISTIC IDEAL OF VIVEKANANDA

I think that Vivekananda's greatest service is the development in his teaching of the lofty ideals of humanism which incorporate the finest features of Indian culture.

Since ancient times lofty life-asserting humanistic ideas have formed the foundation of India's world outlook. These ideas have been expressed in a religious-philosophical form which as they developed paved their way in constant struggle against the scholastic, ascetic and passive contemplation of the world. It is these ideas that infuse many of the works of Vedic literature, the ancient Indian epics, the greatest writing of Kalidasa and the democratic poetry of the *bhakti*.

Vivekananda assimilated and modified the religious-philosophical ideas of the Vedanta, adapting them to the conditions of the new life. The voice of Vivekananda at the end of the last century resounded loudly in the enslaved, brutally exploited country where all human rights were trampled under foot, in a country torn asunder by caste, religious and racial prejudices assiduously fomented by the colonialists. Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that Vivekananda's voice was filled with calm and dignity, confidence in himself and his mission and at the same time was infused with dynamic and fiery energy and a fervent desire to make India go forward. 'He made Indian philosophy concern itself with the problems of the common man', writes Swami Ranganathananda. 'He brings

down the Vedanta to fertilize the fields of common life.’<sup>1</sup>

It is hard to understand the distinctions in the development of the humanistic basis of contemporary Indian culture without taking into account the influence exerted on it by the religious-philosophical ideology widespread in India, in particular without a correct analysis of the ideas and views of Vivekananda and also some other religious social reformers and enlighteners, such as Rammohun Roy, Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, Said Ahmad Khan, and Aurobindo Ghosh.

In my studies of contemporary Indian literature I have more than once had the opportunity to see what great influence the humanistic ideals of Vivekananda have exercised on the works of many writers. It is difficult in a brief article to examine in detail this interesting yet little-studied problem. But as an illustration one could cite the poetry of Suryakanta Tripathi Nirala, outstanding poet and prose writer in Hindi who died recently, in which the influence of Vivekananda’s views can clearly be traced.

#### NATURE OF VIVEKANANDA’S HUMANISM

In my opinion, Vivekananda’s humanism has nothing in common with the Christian ideology which dooms man to passivity and to begging Gód for favours. He tried to place religious ideology at the service of the country’s national interests, the emancipation of his enslaved compatriots. Vivekananda wrote that the colonialists were building one church after another in India, while the Eastern countries needed bread and not religion. He would sooner see all man turn into confirmed atheists than into superstitious simpletons.

To elevate man Vivekananda identifies him with God. ‘The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body’, he declared. ‘Of course, all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples.’<sup>2</sup>

In his desire to elevate man, Vivekananda put forward the idea that the highest divine substance—Brahman—is personified in millions of ordinary living people and therefore the worship

of God is tantamount to serving man. He called for the all-round development of the human personality and the assertion of man's right to happiness in this world and the fostering in the ordinary man of a sense of his own dignity. In a word, everything that Vivekananda proclaimed in India for the first time at the end of the last century, facilitated the development of the qualitatively new humanism which played an important part in the general upsurge of national consciousness and the struggle of the Indian people for independence.

In the literature of the people of India these two features of the new humanism, in my opinion, were manifested first of all and most vividly in the works of Rabindranath Tagore.

Though we do not agree with the idealistic basis of Vivekananda's humanism, we recognise that it possesses many features of active humanism manifested above all in a fervent desire to elevate man, to instil in him a sense of his own dignity, sense of responsibility for his own destiny and the destiny of all people, to make him strive for the ideals of good, truth and justice, to foster in man abhorrence for any suffering. The humanistic ideal of Vivekananda is to a certain degree identical with Gorky's Man with a capital letter.

#### VIVEKANANDA'S LOVE FOR THE MASSES

Such a humanistic interpretation of the essence of man largely determines the democratic nature of Vivekananda's world outlook.

The great merit of Vivekananda, in my opinion, is that he was one of the first in India to pay attention to the masses, to the suffering and misfortune of his compatriots: thereby he raised the paramount problem of India of his day. 'I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall,' he wrote. 'They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them.'<sup>3</sup>

Vivekananda not only expressed sympathy and compassion

for the oppressed people, as did at that time many liberal reformers who through partial reforms in the way of life sought somehow to ease the lot of their compatriots. He criticised the crying inadequacy of such reforms and told those who thought it possible through half-hearted measures and the begging of favours from the colonialists to solve the cardinal social and political problems of the age: 'You talk of social reform ? But what do you do ? All that you mean by your social reform is either widow-remarriage or female-emancipation, or something of that sort. . . . Such a scheme of reform may do good to a few no doubt, but of what avail is that to the whole nation ?'<sup>4</sup>

Vivekananda sought to put up in contrast to such half-hearted reforms affecting only narrow spheres of society's life, cardinal demands for a change in the condition of the working masses. 'The one problem you have is to give the masses their rights', he stressed.<sup>5</sup> He told reformers that he himself was a bigger reformer than anyone of them. They wanted only partial, miserly reforms, while he called for a radical reform.

#### VIVEKANANDA AS A REVOLUTIONARY

It seems to us that when Vivekananda spoke of a radical reform he meant a revolutionary change in the social system, in other words, for his views Vivekananda was rather a revolutionary than a reformer. Instinctively Vivekananda understood the active role of the masses in the historical development of his country. This is shown in particular by his statement that the influence and power of the Kshatriya and the wealth of the Vaishya are possible only thanks to the physical work of the Shudra. It is they that form the true body of any society.

#### VIVEKANANDA AS A SOCIALIST

But he approached the solution of the problem of social inequality from the positions of Utopian Socialism, placing hopes in the good will and magnanimity of the propertied classes. He branded as a traitor anyone who having received



an education and accumulated wealth at the cost of the blood of the toilers forgets about them. 'You have long oppressed these forbearing masses, now is the time for their retribution', he stated.<sup>6</sup>

His ear keenly attuned to the voice of the epoch, Vivekananda was able to discern in it the still indistinct grumble of the toiling masses, rising to fight for their rights. 'The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this, determined to exact their legitimate dues.'<sup>7</sup> Pointing out that the workers of Europe and America were already fighting for their legitimate rights, Vivekananda wrote: 'Signs of this awakening have shown themselves in India, too, as is evident from the number of strikes among the lower classes nowadays.'<sup>8</sup>

Witnessing this, Vivekananda foresaw the inevitability of class battles, utopically dreaming at the same time about the reconciliation of class contradictions through the voluntary renunciation of privileges by the higher classes. 'When the masses will wake up', he wrote, 'they will come to understand your oppression of them, and by a puff of their mouth you will be entirely blown away ! It is they who have introduced civilisation amongst you; and it is they who will then pull it down....Therefore I say, try to rouse these lower classes from slumber by imparting learning and culture to them. When they will awaken—and waken one day they must—they also will not forget your good services to them and will remain grateful to you.'<sup>9</sup>

He flayed social injustice and dreamed of a harmonious order in a society founded on the lofty ideals of freedom and equality.

'A time will come', Vivekananda wrote, 'when the Sudras ...with their in born Sudra nature and habits...will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to break slowly upon the Western world and the thoughtful are at their wits' end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon.

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Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism and other like sects are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow.'<sup>10</sup>

### VIVEKANANDA'S FAITH IN COMMON MAN

Another great merit of Vivekananda : he was able intuitively to arrive at the idea that only the working class, which was just coming into being in India at that time, was the decisive force in social development. He said that when he saw the Bengali workers engaged in their tasks his feeling of hopelessness about his compatriots would vanish almost completely. He saw how they were gradually developing courage, becoming physically strong, fearless and energetic. Even street cleaners did not know that servility which was customary in natives. He was struck by these changes. While acclaiming the development of an industry which was bringing Indian deliverance from backwardness and the survivals of feudalism, Vivekananda was aware of many contradictions of capitalist society which turns the worker into a mere appendage of the machine.

Notwithstanding the haziness and abstract nature of his social ideals and world outlook as a whole, determined above all by the contradictory conditions of India's development, Vivekananda firmly believed that only the people who become masters of their destiny, could be the builders of the new society. He was convinced that only the people could regain for India her former greatness. That is why he held that it is the duty of all upright men of India to advance the cultural level of the people, to sow the seeds of the truth and knowledge in the hearts of the millions. In this respect the educational views of Vivekananda were closely intertwined with the world outlook of Rabindranath Tagore. 'There are many things to learn', Vivekananda wrote, 'we must struggle for new and higher things till we die.'<sup>11</sup>

### VIVEKANANDA AS A NATIONALIST

In my opinion, the Utopian striving to reconcile class contradictions stemmed from a fervent desire to unite all the

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—THE GREAT INDIAN

forces of the people for struggle against colonialism. In the hard years of colonial rule, the inhuman exploitation of the Indian people and the constant attempts to trample upon their dignity and national pride, Vivekananda was one of the few men in India who dared to come out boldly in defence of his people.

In the struggle against colonial oppression Vivekananda sought to find support in the ancient Indian traditions, particularly religious ideology. He also strove to interpret the religious tenets and dogmas of Hinduism in such a way as to place religion at the defence of India's national interests, to unite the people to fight for independence. He declared that religion was necessary for defending man and society, for peace and tranquillity. 'The one common ground that we have', he pointed out, 'is our sacred tradition, our religion. That is the only common ground, and upon that we shall have to build.'<sup>12</sup> At the same time it must be noted that, notwithstanding the idealistic roots of his world outlook, religious fanaticism was always alien to Vivekananda. He said that he would sooner prefer to have all his compatriots turn into confirmed atheists than into superstitious simpletons, because the desire for the supernatural and superstition were always a sign of weakness.

He wanted to see his compatriots strong and bold, proud and independent, considering this one of the major pledges of liberation from slavery. 'Your country requires heroes; be heroes', he urged his compatriots. 'Stand firm like a rock. Truth always triumphs... Strength is life, weakness is death, strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery... We become miserable, because we are weak.'<sup>13</sup>

This call has not lost its significance in present-day India when the Indian people still have to accomplish so much in constructive endeavour and progress in order to get rid forever of the curse of colonial slavery, poverty, darkness and ignorance. Is not there a contemporary ring to the words of

Vivekananda that '...all great undertakings are achieved through mighty obstacles... Forward. We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage, infinite patience, then only will great things be achieved.'<sup>14</sup>

One cannot but assess highly Vivekananda's message, addressed to his compatriots groaning in the vice of colonial slavery, to be strong and brave in the struggle for their happiness and a better future, not to hope for divine providence, but to rely on their own forces. 'The old religion said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself... Stand up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny'.<sup>15</sup>

All these calls, in my opinion, had only one purpose, to inspire the people to fight for their rights, to instill in their hearts confidence in their own strength. That is why we consider Vivekananda a fervent fighter against colonialism.

This indefatigable sower of the truth and flayer of every injustice walked thousands of kilometres along the roads of India. He beheld tears and grief, the starvation and death of his disinherited brothers and sisters. He spoke with hatred of the British colonialists who were guilty of the immeasurable misfortunes of the Indian people. He pointed out that India would have resources sufficient for a population five times greater than she had if its entire output were not exported. India was governed by terrorist methods. British soldiers were killing the men, ravishing the women and then going back home where they were given a pension for life at India's expense. Vivekananda well understood that such a situation could not last long and that the time was not distant when the people of India would break the chains of colonial slavery. While at first he thought that British domination would be overthrown through an uprising of the princes, subsequently he arrived at the conclusion that India's only hope was her masses. The higher classes were dead, physically and morally.

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Vivekananda loved his motherland and its people. Herein lay the power of his patriotism, the significance of his entire selfless life sacrificed on the altar of the motherland.

His selfless love for the motherland exceeded his belief in divinity. He wrote that the only God who existed was his people, their hands, feet, eyes, ears, everywhere they covered everything. For him India was the only sky, the welfare of India was his welfare.

Vivekananda said: 'Remember always that there is not in the world any other country whose institutions are really better in their aims and objects than the institutions of this land'.<sup>16</sup> But sentiments of national narrow-mindedness were alien to him. He never sought isolation from outside influences and always urged his compatriots to assimilate the best that had been accumulated by the culture of all mankind. He said that the cause of India's decline was her isolation from the other peoples of the world and that the only way out of stagnation was to return into the stream of the rest of the world. Motion is a sign of life, he stressed.

### VIVEKANANDA AS AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST

At the same time Vivekananda's searching mind noticed many things that were hidden under the outward glitter of Western civilization. In his public statements Vivekananda relentlessly exposed bourgeois chauvinism, capitalist competition, the quest for profit, the fabulous luxury of the handful of exploiters and disastrous impoverishment and rightlessness of the millions of toilers, religious and racial discrimination, intrigue, and violence.

In contrast to some Indian leaders of that age who naively believed in the miracles of Western civilisation, Vivekananda well understood the essence of imperialist freedom and democracy. 'They that have money', he pointed out, 'have kept the Government of the land under their thumb, are robbing and drying up all the sap out of the people, and sending them as soldiers to fight and be slain on foreign shores, so that, in

case of victory their coffers may be full of gold bought by the blood of subject-people on the field of battle'.<sup>17</sup> 'All those things that you hear about—constitutional Government, freedom, liberty, and parliaments—are but jokes'.<sup>18</sup>

During his first visit to the United States Vivekananda proclaimed it the homeland of freedom. But on coming to know more intimately the order of things in that country he well understood the real value of that 'freedom' and his former illusions were swiftly dispelled. He was indignant at the power of money, the unlimited rule of the financial plutocracy and its uncurbed drive for riches. Vivekananda said outright that his old conceptions of America as the future hope of emancipated mankind, were wrong. On returning from a tour of European countries he wrote that Europe resembled a military camp. Everywhere he felt the stench of war.

Vivekananda did not visit our country, although there is information that while abroad he met Russian revolutionaries who were in exile. Too bad, no material has been preserved about Vivekananda's conversation, for example, with the Russian revolutionary Kropotkin. It may be assumed that these meetings exerted a definite influence on Vivekananda. Assessing the development of events, he said that the future upheaval which should usher in a new era would come either from Russia or from China. Romain Rolland quotes him as saying that he could not tell exactly which, but it would be one of these two countries.

#### VIVEKANANDA'S WORLD OUTLOOK

One more aspect of Vivekananda's world outlook should be mentioned: his fervent desire to unite the peoples of India, his assertion that India was one State, notwithstanding the desire of the colonialists to stamp out the age-old striving of the peoples of India for consolidation. Although in this assertion Vivekananda proceeded above all from an idealistic concept of the unity of the people's spirit based on a common religion, nevertheless this does not minimise the role his views

have played in creating present-day India as a united, monolithic and peace-loving State.

Vivekananda's impassioned call to general fraternity and unity of India's peoples, to the abolition of religious and communal discord, and of caste prejudices were combined with an appeal for peace and friendship among all the nations of the world, which is the cornerstone of the Indian tradition, the main content of the Indian national character.

Urging people to be fearless and bold, to fight the dark forces for their happiness and a better future, Vivekananda at the same time declared that it was hopeless and useless to try and rule the world by force of arms. Vivekananda called for the establishment of friendly relations between all nations, based on love of men for each other. That is why we must regard Vivekananda as one of the initiators in India of the most humane movement of our time, the peace movement.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: AN ASSESSMENT

In recent years, studying various problems of Indian philosophy, I had occasion to read many works about Vivekananda written in India and other countries, I have also discussed various aspects of his teaching with scientists of different countries. To my mind, there are quite contradictory, at times mutually exclusive, opinions and views on many questions related to an assessment of the world outlook and activities of Vivekananda. Unable to discuss in detail all the various appraisals, I will merely speak of two diametrically opposite views of Vivekananda's world outlook which one finds at times in the works of foreign scientists. On the one hand, in my opinion, there is a tendency to regard Vivekananda merely as an idealist philosopher, a religious mystic, that is, to stress only one side of his teaching. At times the proponents of such an interpretation try to stress the all but supernatural character of his personality as, for example, Swami Abhedananda says that Vivekananda was a preacher of the truth who arose, like a gigantic comet, over the horizon.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, I think that some authors go to the other extreme, trying to picture Vivekananda as all but a Marxist. Bhupendranath Dutt writes that the Marxist will be surprised when he sees that the ideas of Marx are embodied in the views of Vivekananda.<sup>20</sup>

Both assertions seem wrong to me.

Vivekananda's world outlook can be properly understood and evaluated when examining it in the inseparable connection with the entire economic, social, political and cultural life of India in his time. It reflects many of the contradictions inherent in the ideologists of the advanced Indian intelligentsia who took the road of struggle for national liberation but at that time still had no clear-cut and definite ideological foundation and philosophical basis.

Vivekananda's place in the development of India's social thought can be properly understood only by considering it a logical development of the ideology of religious and social reformation started in the first half of the nineteenth century by Rammohun Roy.

A one-sided appraisal of Vivekananda can thus lead to wrong conclusions and generalisations about the development of social thought in India at the threshold of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In my opinion, a parallel could be drawn here with Leo Tolstoi. The world outlook of the great Russian writer was assessed differently in our country. It was only the writings of V. I. Lenin about Tolstoi, in which the contradictory nature of his views was revealed and the strong and weak sides of his world outlook were examined, that laid the foundation for a genuinely scientific study of his immense heritage, of his intricate and contradictory views.

It seems to me that for a proper understanding of the role and importance of Vivekananda it is necessary to ascertain the intricate inter-connection of traditions and innovation in his world outlook and all his activities.

It goes without saying that Vivekananda must not be regarded merely as an idealistic philosopher and religious



mystic who tried to put up in opposition to the materialist scientific world outlook various religious philosophical dogmas of Hinduism.

By his attempt to revive the ancient religious philosophical traditions and adapt religion to the requirements of the present age, Vivekananda objectively helped to popularise among the masses the ideas of liberation, and imparted to these ideas the nature of a sacred religious duty.

I have discussed earlier the democratic views of Vivekananda which enable some scholars to consider him a socialist.

Vivekananda persistently sought a way out of his country's plight. Although his socio-economic and political views had elements of eclecticism, a combination of spontaneous rebellious spirit against social injustice, social Utopia, of the ideas of reformism and revolutionary protest, notwithstanding the historical conditioning and class limitations of his philosophical and sociological views, his world outlook as a whole played a constructive part in the development of the national liberation movement in India, in rallying the Indian people to struggle against colonialism.

His historical merit, in my opinion, is that he was one of the first ideologists of the epoch of national awakening who openly and resolutely called for active struggle to remake society and to win independence. But his religious idealistic world outlook prevented him from properly understanding and appraising life around him.

In his book *Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru rightly determines Vivekananda's place in the general struggle of the Indian people for national independence, thereby providing the requisites for a complete, objective analysis of his world outlook.

Much could be said and written about Vivekananda, many arguments could be advanced upholding different standpoints in an effort to explain his intricate and inimitable world outlook. More works about him will no doubt be written both in India and other countries and this is fine if they help under-

stand more fully and deeply the ideas of the great patriot. We can safely say that many years will pass, many generations will come and go, Vivekananda and his time will become the distant past, but never will there fade the memory of the man who all his life dreamed of a better future for his people, who did so much to awaken his compatriots and move India forward, to defend his much-suffering people from injustice and brutality. Like a rocky cliff protecting a coastal valley from storm and bad weather, from the blows of ill winds and waves, Vivekananda fought courageously and selflessly against the enemies of his motherland.

Together with the Indian people, Soviet people who already know some of the works of Vivekananda published in the USSR, highly revere the memory of the great Indian patriot, humanist and democrat, impassioned fighter for a better future for his people and all mankind.

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## PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHING OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

V. S. KOSTYUCHENKO

THREE motifs constantly resound in Vivekananda's works, thematically extraordinarily varied and using the whole gamma of artistic-expressive media, recalling, in the words of Romain Rolland (see 89, 576), the classical models of polyphonic music. These are the principal motifs of the whole Indian philosophy of modern times. The motif of *reformation* is 'universal religion', putting an end to religious discords, superstitions, fanaticism. The motif of *enlightenment* is reason, science, education, shaking the stagnant forms of social existence. And lastly, the motif of *restoration* is the humanist idea of 'free man on free earth', of man who has thrown away the burden of outlived notions which undermined his dignity and checked his development. The fixed regulations of human life, so characteristic of the Indian society of that time, inherited from the medieval period, were condemned by Vivekananda as decisively as by his great predecessor Rammohun Roy. 'The trees never disobey law. I never say of cowasteal. An oyster never told a lie', he observes ironically, 'yet they are not greater than man. This life is a tremendous assertion of freedom; and this obedience to law, carried far enough, would make us simply matter—either in society, or in politics, or religion. Too many laws are a sure sign of death. . . . If you study the characteristics of India, you will find that no nation possesses so many laws as the Hindus, and national death is the result'. (8, 5, 214-15) Vivekananda is against blind obeisance to authority, against acceptance of traditions only on the strength of their centuries-old existence. 'Let men think ! . . .', he pathetically exclaims. 'The glory of man is that he is a thinking being !' (8, 2, 334) And Vivekananda continues that if he is to choose between mankind consisting of thinking

atheists and mankind blindly accepting on faith the traditional religious concepts, he would prefer the former (*ibid.*). Naturally, the statements of this kind evoked exceptionally sharp reaction in orthodox Hinduist circles (see 97, 166).

But Vivekananda is not from amongst those who are easily deterred. To spite the embittered representatives of orthodoxy he reiterated again and again the need for free development of human capacities and powers, not only mental but also physical (see 89, XXV). And hence his famous aphorisms spread all over India—'what we need are muscles of iron and nerves of steel' (*ibid.*, 123); 'the heaven is nearer through football than through the *Gita*' (quoted from: 52, VII): 'you will be able to understand *Gita* more easily when your muscles become stronger' (89, 491).

Completely in Roy's spirit, Vivekananda advocates the creation of conditions for free mental and physical development of Indians, considering foolish and hypocritical categorical assertions of the orthodoxy about the perniciousness of material comfort. 'The grapes are sour' he recalls the famous fable (see 8, 4, 313). The traditional pessimistic and ascetic orders of life are sickening to Vivekananda. He refuses to consider 'long faces' a symbol of spirituality (see 8, 2, 334), and declares the ascetic 'pursuit of suffering' humiliating for man (see 8, 1, 409).

#### CRITIC OF UTILITARIANISM

But it is precisely on this issue that one sees substantial differences between Vivekananda and Roy. Vivekananda is not only against traditional medieval notions about man but also against the West European (above all, British) bourgeois conceptions of man migrating to India in the middle of the nineteenth century and becoming extremely popular amongst the 'Anglo-Indians'. In this context he sharply criticizes *hedonism* and *utilitarianism* (considering them mutually related theoretical trends). And this very criticism, and the arguments used by Vivekananda initiate a distinctive tradition in the history of

Indian philosophy of modern and contemporary period—with various modifications, this criticism would be reiterated later by Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, Tagore, Gandhi.

First of all, Vivekananda finds hedonic 'going after pleasure' as humiliating for the dignity of man as the ascetic 'going after pain': 'We are whipped, and when we begin to weep, nature gives us a dollar; again we are whipped, and when we weep, nature gives us a piece of ginger-bread, and we begin to laugh again....' (*ibid.*, 410)

Turning pleasures into the main aim of man's life leads, in Vivekananda's view, to a blind alley. After the chain of enjoyments coming one after the other there inevitably comes saturation, and then the quest for fresh, more exquisite enjoyments and still more sharply expressed satisfaction etc. 'Superoriginal' methods of 'satisfying the nerves' are invented, these become the fashion, and people, like a herd of sheep, go after this fashionable illusion and find more and more disappointments. This criticism (resulting from Vivekananda's impressions gained at the time of his travels in the countries of the West), undoubtedly testifies to the keen sense of observation of the thinker, who caught in infancy certain tendencies which appeared in full measure far later, in the twentieth century.

Vivekananda himself, however, believes that neither pleasure nor pain can serve as the highest principle, determining a man's conduct. What is important from his point of view is the process of formation of human character, of attainment of maturity by man and the capacity to discover and use the possibilities latent in him: 'Pleasure is not the goal of man... after a time man finds that... both pleasure and pain are great teachers, and that he learns as much from evil as from good.' (*ibid.*, 25).

Similar is the criticism made of utilitarianism. When people make the attainment of profit the highest aim of their life irrespective of where this profit lies—in money, fame, power—the insatiable thirst makes them not live but pursue untiringly the uncapturable phantom of happiness. Vivekananda

ironically expounds the credo of 'ordinary utilitarianists' as a corroboration of the fact that 'it is necessary to live to eat, and not to eat to live'. (*ibid.*, 30) The most exquisite utilitarianism from his viewpoint is like the vital orientation of the members of a Muslim sect whose goal, from very childhood, is having for themselves a luxurious grave, which is safely reached by the end of the life.

Utilitarianism, in Vivekananda's view, does not simply place the cart before the horse and subordinate the process of life to something external in relation to it or having at best a secondary significance. It tries to reduce the highest manifestation of life to the lowest, and concern for all ethical ideals (even the noblest manifestation of human spirit), aesthetic values, aspirations for truth to the same invariable calculation of profits and losses, a sober and prosaic calculation: 'In these days we have to measure everything by utility—by how many pounds, shillings, and pence it represents'. (8, 2, 83)

By reducing morality, art, philosophy etc., to various spheres of operation of the 'principle of utility', the utilitarians are not in a position, from Vivekananda's viewpoint, to explain satisfactorily what belongs to these spheres. Thus, the utilitarians have not been able to establish the main ethical principle proclaimed by them ('maximum good for maximum number of persons'): 'You will find people saying nowadays that they have utilitarian grounds as the basis of morality. What is this basis? Procuring the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number. Why should I do this? Why should I not produce the greatest unhappiness to the greatest number if that serves my purpose?' (8, 1, 181) The utilitarians, by presenting people as egoistic, associated only by ties of mutual benefit of beings—'social atoms', deprive them, from Vivekananda's viewpoint, precisely of what is characteristic of man. A man differs from an animal not by his capacity to calculate profits, but by that of self-sacrifice, finding most lucid expression in 'extreme' moral situations when there can be no question of direct or even indirect profit for any individual—

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just as an individual: 'the more a man is capable of sacrificing himself for the sake of others, the greater he is, while the most prominent in the animal world is that animal which is capable of killing the maximum number of other animals'. (8, 6, 152)

In his criticism of utilitarianism Vivekananda is in many ways right. The attempt to reduce all multiplicity of human relation to a relation of profit leads the representatives of utilitarianism to truly caricature conclusions. In the words of Marx, 'under the mask of his interest, the discerning bourgeois will always place some third thing between himself and his vital activity—a manner raised to truly classical form by Bentham, for whom a nose must be of some interest before it decides to smell'. (3, 201)

## FOOTSTEPS OF RAMAKRISHNA

Absolutizing some tendencies appearing in the life of bourgeois society, and applying these to all times as manifestations of some invariable 'human nature', the utilitarians act as apologists of the contemporary social reality. Interestingly, the relationship of utilitarianism to bourgeois reality is also in some measure defined by Vivekananda: 'At best, therefore, utilitarian theories can only work under present social conditions. Beyond that they have no value'. (8, 2, 64) But he just defines this relationship; nothing more. He cannot explain it satisfactorily. In the ultimate end he explains both the 'adaptability' of utilitarian structures to 'present social conditions' as well as the 'complaisance' of the present society in regard to these structures, by proceeding from spiritual and not material premises. The reason is...the dominance of materialistic ideas (see, for instance, 8, 3, 156-7). In the given case Vivekananda follows the footsteps of his predecessors Ramakrishna and Dayananda. Like them, he tries to associate the failure of illusions of enlightenment in the eighteenth century with the spiritual unfoundedness of materialism and atheism. Like them again, he sees in religion the panacea for the misfortunes of capitalism. Establishing theoretically his

thesis about the 'unfoundedness' of materialism, Vivekananda insists that materialism cannot solve the '*riddle of man*'. From the materialistic viewpoint, he affirms, a man is either a purely biological being, or a simple aggregate of moving particles of various sizes and forms (see 8, 2, 197). But in such reduction, not only the main manifestations of human spiritual activity, but also man's inherent urge for *freedom*—this 'eternal goal of man' (8, 1, 333)—remain unexplained. Vivekananda categorically asserts that a human being remains a human being only when he upholds this freedom, fighting against all kinds of obstacles, external and internal (see 8, 2, 64-5). Unlike other beings, a human being can never be satisfied by any position in the world; he constantly tries to change it and come out of its confines (see 8, 1, 333). And it is just this constant insatiability that makes him the highest being in the universe (*ibid.*, 142).

Undoubtedly, Vivekananda underscores the real weaknesses of one-sided naturalistic understanding of man. Unlike other beings in nature, man 'belongs' to his own self as a universal and therefore free being (see 4, 92). This universality of man, of course, cannot be explained either purely biologically or by proceeding from the properties of 'its component particles'; it is linked with the specific character of his social existence. The whole cannot principally be reduced to the sum of its component parts, and the higher levels of existence to the lower. But criticizing naturalistic notion of man and its metaphysical and mechanistic premises, Vivekananda first identifies, unjustifiably, metaphysical materialism with materialism in general, and, secondly, himself approaches metaphysically the solution of the problem of freedom. From his point of view, freedom and need are principally incompatible. On the one hand is the world, which is dominated by iron necessity and in which everything exists in the rigid limits of space, time, and cause; on the other is its treasured, most profound spiritual essence beyond time and space—the empire of freedom (see 8, 2, 118-29). The empire of necessity is the



object of science (see 8, 1, 334), the empire of freedom is the object of religion (see 8, 2, 125-6).\*

But Vivekananda sees the precariousness of the positions of religion in the modern world, which, in his view, is conditioned by two circumstances. First, by rivalry, and mutual denial of existing religions, leading to their 'relativization': the growth of relations between the various units of the world led to 'universal confrontation' of its own kind of religious notions, in whose conditions the attempts to uphold the uniqueness of any religion, declaring all the rest false, do ultimately recoil against it only. 'Truth has always been universal. If I alone were to have six fingers on my hand while all of you had only five, you would not think that my hand was the true intent of nature but rather that it was abnormal and diseased. Just so with religion. If one creed alone were to be true and all the others untrue, you would have a right to say that that religion was diseased'. (8, 1, 328)

Secondly, the positions of religion are demolished by science: the expansion of knowledge about the world leads to growing confrontation between scientific knowledge and religious dogmas. 'All the world over there have been fights between secular knowledge and religious knowledge... the one claiming infallible authority as its guide, refusing to listen to anything that secular knowledge has to say on the point, the other, with its shining instrument of reason, wanting to cut to pieces everything religion could bring forward. Religions have been again and again defeated, and almost exterminated. The worship of the goddess of Reason during the French Revolution was not the first manifestation of that phenomenon in the history of humanity... The physical sciences are better equipped now than formerly, and religions have become less and less equipped. The foundations have been all undermined, and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows

\*It is interesting that Vivekananda stresses the similarity of his views on the given point with the Kantian (see 8, 1, 199). At the same time, freedom (as also god, as well as immortality), for him is not by any means the 'postulate of practical reason'.

in the privacy of his heart that he can no more believe.' (*ibid.*, 365-6)

In this context, Vivekananda, on the one hand, puts forth the theory of '*universal religion*' making it possible to reconcile, as it were, the existing forms of religious worship, and on the other, suggests, as philosophical basis of such a religion, *neo-Vedanta*, that is, Vedanta whose positions are expounded in a form supposedly permitting to reveal their 'agreement on principle' with the data of modern sciences. We shall pass on to a survey of these theories.

#### 'UNIVERSAL RELIGION': RELIGIOUS SYNTHESIS

The numerous West European and American publications devoted to him, as also the various anthologies on Indian philosophy, single out Vivekananda above all as the creator of the theory of 'universal religion'. Stressed and brought to the fore, here are apologetic moments in Vivekananda's teachings about religion. In fact, his attitude to it was by no means simple and easy and this should always be kept in mind in characterizing the views of the thinker. This simplicity is perhaps most lucidly manifest in Vivekananda's lecture on 'the way to the realization of a universal religion', delivered by him at Pasadena in 1900: 'Though there is nothing that has brought to man more blessings than religion, yet at the same time, there is nothing that has brought more horror than religion. Nothing has made more for peace and love than religion; nothing has engendered fiercer hatred than religion. Nothing has made the brotherhood of man more tangible than religion; nothing has bred more bitter enmity between man and man than religion. Nothing has built more charitable institutions, more hospitals for men, and even for animals, than religion; nothing has deluged the world with more blood than religion'. (8, 2, 358)

For understanding correctly the phenomenon of religion, it is necessary, from Vivekananda's point of view, to analyse the structure of existing religions. All these, in his conviction,

consist of three parts—philosophy, which covers the main principles and objectives of religion; mythology, which strives to present these principles in a more visual and concrete form and contains the aggregate of traditions of various kinds; and lastly, ritual, the most concrete, sensual and visual part of religion (see 8, 1, 270). The greatest divergences amongst religions are linked just with ritual and mythology, and the greatest affinity in them is in philosophy (see 8, 2, 377). True, there are divergences even in the philosophy of religions, but these, as Vivekananda assumes, can be reduced to some basic points and presented in the form of steps leading to the single Supreme Truth. Thus, the attitude of man to God is thought of first as something external (God is the ‘Supreme’ Being different from us, the ruler of the world—the typical idea of *The Old Testament*), then as internal (God is in the hearts of people—the idea of *the New Testament*) and lastly, there is reached (in *Advaita Vedanta*) an understanding of complete identity of essence of man and God (see 8, 1, 321). All religions, because of the presence of this ‘Supreme Truth’, their ‘central point’, can be presented in the form of an endless number of radii of a circle converging into one point (see 8, 2, 383).

The multiple differences apparently seen in religions are, in Vivekananda’s view, associated first with the differences in psychological types of peoples, and secondly, with the differences in specific historical conditions of existence of these and other types of religious worship. The character of a religion carries the stamp of the features of the spiritual mould of its founder, of his tendency to mystical ecstasies or concentrated thinking, aesthetic or ethical perception of the world. Of paramount significance are also the geographical characteristics, the characteristics of the manner of life of the respective peoples etc. (*ibid.*, 371 and 166).

In view of the fact that such kinds of differences cannot be eliminated, Vivekananda considers necessary not the creation of one religion for all—with mythology and ritual formulated on one model—but identification of common features in the

already existing religions and affirmation of relations of 'collaboration' and not hostility amongst them.

#### ESSENCE OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

The essence of Vivekananda's 'universal religion' is most distinctly seen on comparing his teaching with the reformist ideas of Rammohun Roy and Dayananda. While Roy rejects a majority of specific features of Hinduism, its ritual, a mental 'distillation' of religious notions of their own kind (and in this sense closer to deism), and Dayananda has 'militant Hinduism', there is in Vivekananda a synthesis of its own kind, that is, and attempt to find a *common basis* of religions while *preserving* the specific forms of religious worship—which corresponded also to the needs of the struggle against religious intolerance—and the tendency to defend the specific form of Hinduism from the attacks of the Christian missionaries ('there is no polytheism in India')—he declares at the World's Parliament of Religions in reply to a charge made against the Indians for their idol worship (see 8, 1, 13).

In the conditions of India of that time, Vivekananda's teaching on religion undoubtedly had a number of positive features. Above all, his constant statements in defence of tolerance, against fanaticism and inflammation of religious-community differences were historically progressive. The actions of the Christian missionaries, fighting tooth and nail to implant Christianity in various countries of the world are, according to Vivekananda, those of a 'tiger thirsting for blood' (8, 2, 362). But no less sharply does he stand in opposition to the Hinduists who condemn the believers of other faiths (particularly, Muslims) for using meat in their food: 'Is God indeed such a great fool like you that the stream of his noble acts would stop just because of a piece of meat ? Stressing that the believers of other faiths were never persecuted (in the course of such persecutions, attempts were made to wipe them out physically) in India ('the Hindu fanatic burns himself on the pyre, he never lights the fire of inquisition'—8, 1, 16), Vivekananda

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censures at the same time all other forms of persecutions of people for their religious affiliation. In his words, 'besides the sword, besides the material weapon, there are weapons still more terrible—contempt, social hatred, and social ostracism. Now, these are the most terrible of all inflictions that are hurled against persons who do not think exactly in the same way as we do'. (8, 2, 362-3) And this, Vivekananda stresses, can make a country look like a graveyard.

### OPPOSITION TO RITUALISM

Indirectly associated with his condemnation of religious intolerance was his opposition to ritualism, to exaggerations on the role of rituals to the detriment of 'spiritual side' of religion (in this respect he allies himself to Ramakrishna). It is just ritualism that from his point of view, is responsible for fanatic opposition of specific features of religion proper to the features of all the rest, 'to loss of perspective', on the strength of which differences make unity difficult. It is true, the rituals and the symbols and images associated with them are accepted by Vivekananda as quite essential, and sometimes he even calls the Universe a gigantic idol and the object of ritual action, but the rituals for him are simply a means and in no way the end. In the course of evolution of religions, however, the means are frequently absolutized and hypertrophized to the detriment of the end: 'The spiritual ideas are developed in arithmetical progression and the ritual—in geometric'. (8, 1, 347) It is against this absolutization that Vivekananda's famous aphorisms are directed: 'it is very good to be born in a temple, but very bad to remain there up to death' (8, 2, 39); 'temples and churches are merely kindergartens of religion' (*ibid.*, 44). However, Vivekananda also calls 'the *Bible* and the Gods' kindergartens of religion (see 8, 8, 140); and, in the present case, the criticism of ritualism is akin to his criticism of religious mythology as a part of religion having the tendency to self-development.

The relativity and conventionality of mythology, their dependence on the image of the personality of their builders, are lucidly shown by Vivekananda on the example of varied, contrasting notions of paradise. Thus, for the Arabs living in a desert paradise means first of all abundance of water (lakes and rivers of paradise); there is a directly opposite image of paradise in mythologems of residents of those areas of India which suffer from constant inundations (see 8, 2, 166). If the paradise of the peaceful agricultural tribes is an idyllic existence alien to all struggle, the paradise of the militant tribes (for instance, of ancient Germans) is a place for waging constant war in the course of which the 'dead' resurrect again and again and everything repeats itself over again (*ibid.*). But Vivekananda not only criticizes the idea of paradise, he considers the very idea of paradise (as also of hell) internally unfounded, for it presupposes the possibility of discerning the good (or evil, if one talks of hell) in 'pure' form. From Vivekananda's point of view, paradise and hell are nevertheless contrasts which are thinkable only in their unity with and struggle against each other (like light and shadow). The 'paradise' is thus a 'castle in the air' (see 8, 1, 195). But it is the idea of hell that Vivekananda particularly condemns because he considers it not only unfounded but also derogatory to man's dignity. In this context, he has a fairly heated argument with the Christian opponents who object to him and say that without the fear of the sufferings of hell people cannot be subjected to the requirements of religion and morals. 'Man who is pushed to religion by fear, does not have any religion !' (*ibid.*, 325) Vivekananda affirms.

It should generally be noted that, with all his tolerance and his constant stress on values of 'internal nucleus' of all religions, including also Christianity (in its 'original' form), Vivekananda is steadfastly opposed to a number of ideas characteristic of the Christian religion (following Dayananda in this regard). Extremely interesting in this sense is, for instance, the lecture given by him at San Francisco in April 1900 on the topic 'Is

Vedanta the Religion of the Future'? (see 8, 8, 122-41) Here he expresses his opposition first of all to such features, typical of historically formed Christianity, as intolerance for other faiths and stress on the significance of what happened in the past, viz. of tradition or religion, to the detriment of the present. But the main target of his criticism are the Christian notions of sinfulness of human nature, of pre-determination, 'noble deeds', need for 'conciliation', etc. The cultivation of these notions, in his view, makes a man a slave (see *ibid.*, 130), injects into him lack of trust in his own powers. Nevertheless, it is necessary to make a man trust his own powers: a favourite fable of Vivekananda, constantly found in his works, is that of the lion who had to grow amongst a herd of sheep and did not know his prowess right up to the time when the other lions opened his eyes to his own nature. Equally constantly occurring in Vivekananda's work is the following brilliant formulation: 'Vedanta believes only in one sin, the only one in the world, and it is this: The moment you think of yourself or of any other person as a sinner, you are sinning'. (*ibid.*, 126-7)

How should one appraise, on the whole, Vivekananda's theory of 'universal religion' and his attempt to achieve compromise amongst existing religions on the basis of this theory? Despite all its positive points, this theory was in many ways a simplification, and the attempt to create harmonious relations between religions—utopian.

#### INNER CONVERGENCE OF RELIGIONS

Vivekananda's basic premise about 'inner convergence' of religions with simultaneous 'outer divergence' is a considerable simplification of the real state of affairs. In reality, the greatest religions of the world have a series not only of similar features, but also of typological differences, which are associated with the 'inner divergence'. The attempt to place the respective religions in some imagined 'linear row', to present them in the form of 'steps' leading to the same 'inner nucleus', inevitably leads in practice to 'elimination' of positions of one religion

under the pressure of position of another. For example, Vivekananda often interprets the dogmas of Christian religion in such a way that these appear 'dressed' in the dogmas of Hinduism. As a result, we shall say, the teaching of the first sin is treated as an allegorical version of the Indian teaching of the involvement of the individual into the world of rebirths under the influence of *karma* (see 8, 1, 317), the Christian Trinity is represented as Indian '*trimurti*' (Brahma, Visnu, Siva), Christ is presented as an '*avatara*' (the most famous incarnation of Visnu), etc. (see, for instance, 8, 1, 326; 4, 92). In Vivekananda's view, all religions now existing in the world have, in the ultimate count, one (Indian!) source, but these change first according to local conditions and secondly, 'leaving their ancestral home, got mixed with errors' (8, 1, 319). Speaking of the genetic relations of various religions, particularly Christianity, on the one hand, and Hinduism on the other, Vivekananda, with all his 'Indocentrist' passions, is in many ways true. But though the notions of *trimurti*, *avataras*, etc. apparently did indeed play a no less important role in the origin of Christianity (of course, along with 'local', minor Asian notions), in the Christianity taking shape, the dogmas of Trinity and incarnation of God, central for this faith, are substantially different from the dogmas of Hinduism and cannot be reduced to them. The Christian 'humanization' of God is a single and unrepeatable act (unlike a number of incarnations of Visnu). The Ipostasi of Christian Trinity are personal, 'unmerged' and 'indivisible' unlike *trimurti*. And this, of course, is not simply the result of a 'distorted' perception of Hinduism, of 'errors' in translation of religious ideas. These are typological differences proper, finally formed in the course of the process continuing for several centuries of development of the Christian teaching on the whole, and systematization of its philosophical principles (during the period of *patristika*). It is curious that in his treatment of Christian dogmas, Vivekananda, recasting the work directly contrasting with what had been done by the representatives of *patristika*, automatically repeats the positions



developed by the opponents of orthodox Christianity—for example, the talks of ‘illusoriness’ of physical sufferings of Christ, like docets (see 8, 1, 3-6). It is, of course, difficult to expect that the Christian church could have a favourable attitude to such type of interpretations of Christianity, ‘compromising’ it not only with Hinduism but also with ‘heresies’ condemned by it most vocally far back at the dawn of its existence.

The utopianism of the programme of ‘conciliation’ of religions offered by Vivekananda is clearly discerned if one takes into account the fact that religious differences, arguments, conflicts were actively used in a class society by the representatives of the dominant classes for ‘attracting to this side the attention of the masses from really important and basic economic and political questions...’. (6, 146). Accordingly, despite Vivekananda’s work and the work of the Ramakrishna Mission established by him, directed towards doing away with religious conflicts (in the same way as, despite the efforts of Gandhi), India on the whole, and Bengal, the homeland of Vivekananda, in particular, became in the first half of the twentieth century the arena of bitter religious-community conflicts, constantly fanned and abetted by the British colonial powers. And now it is the reactionary forces in India, opposing social transformations and advocating the perpetuation of out-lived social relations, that are trying to exploit the religious-community differences. These differences can therefore be removed only in the course of an active fight against these forces.

#### NEO-VEDANTA: PHILOSOPHICAL SYNTHESIS

In the centuries-old disputes of protagonists of various trends within Vedanta, blown up with renewed vigour in the nineteenth century, Vivekananda, with all the irony of his attitude to the disputing sides (in one of his works he even calls the disputes of the pandits on this question regularly arranged ‘bull-fights in Benares’—8, 3, 348), does not conceal his sympathies mainly for *advaita*. ‘I am Sankara’, he declares

with pride (32, 7). And indeed the closeness of his views to those of the followers of *advaita* is undoubted. Here, for instance, is one of his most favourite images, the image of the world as a gigantic *avatara*: 'There is a screen here, and some beautiful scenery outside. There is a small hole in the screen through which we can only catch a glimpse of it. Suppose this hole begins to increase; as it grows larger and larger, more and more of the scenery comes into view, and when the screen has vanished, we come face to face with the whole of the scenery. This scene outside is the soul, and the screen between us and the scenery is *maya*—time, space, and causation. There is a little hole somewhere, through which I can catch only a glimpse of the soul. When the hole is bigger, I see more and more, and when the screen has vanished, I know that I am the soul. So changes in the universe are not in the absolute; they are in nature. Nature evolves more and more, until the Absolute manifests itself'. (8, 1, 419) Another favourite image of Vivekananda is that of a prism, seeing through which we see the essentially homogeneous Absolute as multiple and heterogeneous. This prism is *maya*—time, space, causality (see 8, 2, 130).

Thus the real basis of the universe is 'indefinite' (*nirguna*) *Brahman*—the spiritual source, lying outside time and space, and characterized only as negative (*nisprapanca*)—'all-excluding' source. The world of variable and heterogeneous things is something 'not real', relative, existing not independently. And lastly, deep in their essence, the individual and world soul are something completely concurrent. These are three '*kits*' of all *advaita* (though in more detailed definitions of corresponding positions, particularly when we talk of treatment of *maya*, within this trend too, as we can be convinced, there existed differences).

And, nonetheless, the philosophy of Vivekananda is not simply an 'adaptation' of Sankara, in the same way as philosophy of Roy and Dayananda is not simple 'recasting' of Ramanuja and Madhava. It is not just accident that Viveka-

nanda's contemporaries called it 'neo-Vedanta', thereby stressing not only the affinity but also differences between this philosophy and its classical sources. The specific nature of Vivekananda's 'neo-Vedanta' is elicited in the context of the tasks before him.

The first characteristic of this philosophy is associated with Vivekananda's aspirations to show the 'agreement on principle' between the positions of Vedanta and modern science. And this tendency places an indelible stamp both on the whole character of his arguments as well as on his solution of the traditionally important question of relation to the 'scripture'—*sruti*. Accepting the authority of the Vedas, Vivekananda at the same time unambiguously expresses himself against the traditionally orthodox ideas (and shared by Sankara) of their 'infallibility' and 'eternalness'. He finds a number of notions contained in the Vedas and in their philosophical part, the Upanishads, 'coarse' and states: 'Personally I accept in the Vedas only what agrees with reason'. (8, 5, 325) As regards the eternalness of *sruti*, Vivekananda 'reinterprets' the respective orthodox thesis in such a way that it virtually leaves one in no doubt. In his view, the Vedas are eternal only in the sense that, that part of their content which is true, expounds laws which operated also before this monument had been written—'eternal' in this very sense, in his view, are, let us say, the works of Newton (see 8, 1, 5). The following passage from the lecture 'Reason and Religion' delivered by Vivekananda in England shows how unorthodox was his solution of the problem of correlation of faith and knowledge on the whole: 'If a religion is destroyed by such investigation [as we apply to sciences and knowledge outside] it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition, and the sooner it goes, the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen.' (*ibid.*, 366)

## OPPOSITION TO SUPERSTITIONS

In the conditions of India of that time, this thesis of priority

of reason in relation to faith was undoubtedly of great positive significance. Depending upon it, Vivekananda actively opposes various types of prejudices, superstitions, ignorance. In his lectures on 'Practical Vedanta', addressing a wide audience, he says: 'You know in your inmost heart that many of your limited ideas, this humbling of yourself and praying and weeping to imaginary beings, are superstitions. Tell me one case where these prayers have been answered. All the answers that came were from your own hearts. You know there are no ghosts, but no sooner are you in the dark than you feel a little creepy sensation. That is so because in our childhood we have had all these fearful ideas put into our heads'. (8, 2, 301)

At the time of his stay in America, Vivekananda had to come in clash with the theosophists. The fight against them turns out to be long, hard, and persistent; and continues right to the end of his life and we find its echoes on the pages of many Indian newspapers at the end of the last century (see, for instance, 97, 151-83). Vivekananda constantly stresses the damage which the theosophists do to the task of enlightenment and progress in India by misguiding the people and making their minds weak: 'Mystery-mongering and superstition are always signs of weakness. These are always signs of degradation and of death'. (8, 3, 278) Speaking, however, of the activity of the theosophists in the West, he distinctly observes that their 'successes' rest on the craving (so characteristic of the Philistines) for the 'unusual', for the 'sensational', which destroys the monotony of the course of life: 'It is a tendency in western countries, in these modern times, to make a hotchpotch of the brain...it becomes a sort of disease, but this is not religion. Then some want a sensation. Tell them about ghosts and people coming from the North Pole or any other remote place, with wings or in any other form, and that they are invisibly present and watching over them...then they are satisfied and go home; but within twenty-four hours they are ready for a fresh sensation. This is what some call religion. This is the way to the lunatic asylum'. (8, 4, 32) The supersti-

tions appear in a funny or tragic form, and seek 'shelter' always under the cover of mystery, while truth does not 'fear day light' (97, 82).

No wonder, the orthodox Hindus also were not slow to join the theosophists in their desperate attacks on Vivekananda. Vivekananda, we know, criticized not only the imaginary 'miracles' of the theosophists but also miracles in general, considering that the violation of natural courses of events in nature, or the interference of 'outside' forces etc. in it, was not possible. Here is one of his favourite aphorisms: 'I consider miracles the greatest hurdles on the path to truth'. (8, 1, 325—6)

In the context of India, however these 'hurdles', from Vivekananda's viewpoint, are associated not so much with the 'Scripture'—*sruti*—as with 'tradition'—*smriti*: In works ascribed to 'tradition' (and above all in the *Puranas*), the ideas of *sruti* are popularized, adapted to the level of understanding of the ordinary Indian, but are also at the same time distorted. As regards *sruti*, the 'main nucleus' of the views contained there, as Vivekananda assumes, does not in any way conflict with reason and science; besides, the main principles and positions which the modern scientific knowledge rests on, were formulated in *sruti* even more distinctly and lucidly than in the most modern science: true the latter has the advantage, when one talks of parts and details, if 'concrete definitions', but does not always see the forest behind the trees quite distinctly (8, 2, 89). Such observations of Vivekananda conceal motifs, similar in many ways to Dayananda's apology for the Vedas as the source of all knowledge. It is true that, unlike Dayananda, he first stresses the significance, above all, of the 'concluding' part of the Vedas—the Upanishads, and not of the earlier part—the *samhitās*, and, secondly, seeks parallels with modern science in 'principles' and not in 'details' (thereby avoiding many modernizations and forced interpretations so characteristic of his predecessor and a bit too prominent).\*

\*It is interesting that Aurobindo Ghosh, following Vivekananda in this respect, believes that, by concentrating his attention on details, Dayananda... 'underrated' the depth of 'Vedic wisdom' (44, 57).

But in any case, like Dayananda, he strives to show that propaganda and spread of scientific knowledge is not a departure from *śruti* but instead a means of returning to its 'original' content, 'cleansed' of later 'interpolations', in other words, of making it 'harmonize' with enlightenment and reform. Like Dayananda again, he makes all efforts to stress—in spite the 'Europo-centrist' theories—the priority of India in the field of development of knowledge of natural sciences. India for him is the ancestral home not only of religions but also of sciences (see, for instance, 8, 3, 327). Vivekananda undoubtedly did a lot to disperse the false notions of almost complete absence of natural science knowledge in ancient India. Extremely important in this sense is his lecture: 'India's Gift to the World' delivered by him in February 1895 at Brooklyn where he noted the most important attainments of the ancient Indians in the field of Mathematics, Astronomy, Biology (see 47, 507). He is, no doubt, right also in the sense that, in the naively-dialectical notions of the ancient Indians about the development of cosmos and evolution of living beings (as also, however, in the respective notions, say, of the ancient Greeks), there was a great deal of truth, anticipating some features of later scientific views.

#### ASIACENTRISM OF VIVEKANANDA

But first, in his polemics against Europo-centrism, Vivekananda frequently falls into the other extreme—Asiacentrism. Thus, he not only writes that the 'waves of light' coming from the 'ocean of Vedanta' awakened the minds of the creators of Greek philosophy (*ibid.*, 322), but also associates with the influence of the same Vedanta the 'revolution in German philosophy' on the boundary of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see 8, 1, 389). Of course, statements of this kind (and there are quite a lot of them) contain some exaggerations though the influence, we shall say, of Indian philosophical tradition on Pythagoreanism and Platonism is quite probable, and on German romanticism obvious. It is also of interest to



note that the cultural relations of the East and West (in any case, up to nineteenth century) are interpreted by Vivekananda as directed to one side—'Light' comes from the East.

Secondly, Vivekananda, quite in the spirit of Dayananda, often enumerates under the Vedantist, various naturalistic conceptions appearing within other schools or initially expressed tendencies of the Upanishads, heterogeneous in relation to the main idealistic nucleus of Vedanta (such for example, are the conceptions of evolution of primary matter—of *prakriti*, of subtle [*tanmatra*] and coarse [*bhuta*] elements, etc.).

Speaking of the 'agreement' on principle, of Vedanta as the philosophical basis of 'universal religion' with science, Vivekananda also rests, on the one hand, on the aforementioned 'slurring over' of boundaries between the various trends, and, on the other, on specific philosophical advantages of pantheism (even in its idealistic version) compared with creationist conceptions. The 'scientificness' of Vedanta is established by him most frequently on the basis of its contrast with 'non-scientificness' of Christian theology. Vivekananda ridicules the conception of God having created the world from out of nothing, and then 'gone to sleep' (see 8, 2, 425). First, he stresses that creationism is contradictory to the laws of preservation of matter and energy. Secondly, the concept of a world having a beginning in time and limited in space is inwardly contradictory: 'If you can give a beginning to time, the whole concept of time will be destroyed. Try to think of a limit where time began, you have to think of time beyond that limit. Try to think where space begins, you will have to think of space beyond that. Time and space are infinite, and therefore have neither beginning nor end.' (*ibid.*, 425) Like the way the idea of the 'creation' of the world on the whole is absurd, the notion of the creation of individual beings inhabiting it is also equally absurd. Everything in nature, including also man, appears as a result of evolution (*ibid.*, 424). This evolution occurs according to its own inherent laws and does not admit of interference of any alien forces, 'of

divine craft' or 'devil's manipulation' (8, 1, 370). Till this point it has been possible to accept fully Vivekananda's opinions. The concept of Universe, eternal in time and infinite in space, in which everything is in motion, occurring according to laws which are immanent and not dictated by the interference of any external forces, indeed corresponds to the notions of modern science. But thus far, these views have nothing 'specifically Vedantic'. The specific nature of Vedanta, however, comes in just where the above-mentioned concepts are declared to be pertaining to empirical (*vyavaharika*) picture of the world, and its true essence is characterized as something purely spiritual and profoundly different from what relates to the given picture, the beginning. And it is precisely here, that is, when one talks of this spiritual principle of the world that it is difficult to accept Vivekananda's arguments about the conformity of Vedanta and scientific knowledge.

#### 'SCIENTIFICNESS' OF THE CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN

In the course of the attempt to establish 'scientificness' of the concept of *Brahman* two arguments are most frequently reiterated in Vivekananda's works. First, it is asserted that this concept is based on the materials of experience, may be verified, and this was shown far back by the famous Vedic sages—*rishis* (see 8, 1, 7). Secondly, it is said that it corresponds most satisfactorily to the urge of science for unity: the ideal of Chemistry is to reduce all elements to one 'basic element', the ideal of Physics is to reduce all forms of energy to one 'basic energy', and in *Brahman* is precisely achieved this maximum unity, and the absolute homogeneous beginning of all existence turns out to have been found (see *ibid.*, 12). We shall look into these arguments.\*

First of all, what 'experience' does Vivekananda have in view when he speaks of the Vedic sages? The experience of

\*Vivekananda's arguments are all the more of interest because, in a somewhat changed form, these have gone into the 'arsenal' of the twentieth century Indian idealist-philosophers—from Aurobindo Ghosh to Radhakrishnan—and are now repeated in all the ways by their epigons.



'realization', of direct knowledge of *Brahman* in the so-called *turiya*. The teaching about *turiya*, the 'fourth' state of consciousness, is found in the *Mandukya-Upanishad* (see 19, 246-7). The first three states are the waking state, sleep with dreams, and dreamless sleep. According to the *Upanishad*, *turiya* as the highest and the initial state of consciousness differs both from the waking state and state of sleep with dreams (by absence of bifurcation into subject and object), as well as from the state of dreamless sleep (by absence of 'curtailment', 'obscurity'). Proceeding from the idealistically interpreted principle of the identity of structure of micro- and macro-cosmos, the thinkers of the *Upanishads*, on the basis of this teaching, build a ladder of gradations of both, in which there corresponds to *turiya* the most profound essence of I and of the world (*atman—Brahman*), to the state of dreamless sleep—'intellectual I' (*prajna*) and the highest cosmic manifestation of *Brahman* (*Isvara*), to the state of sleep with dreams—the 'vital I' (*taijas*) and 'world embryo' (*Hiranyagarbha*), and lastly, to the waking state—the 'physical I' (*visva*) and cosmos (*Virat*) (see 28, 1, 142). Later, this scheme is somewhat substantially supplemented. Thus, Sankara supplements it with the teaching about three levels of existence and correspondingly of knowledge (see 28, 2, 466). The state of sleep with dreams is linked by him with the lowest and illusory (*pratibhasika*) existence, the waking state—with existence of a higher order, with the object of day to day experience (*vyavaharika*) and lastly, *turiya*—with actual reality (*paramarthika*). This teaching is on the whole also shared by Vivekananda (see, for instance, 8, 5, 134). It is not difficult to be convinced from what has been said above that there is a radical difference between the Vedantic and the scientific understanding of 'experience'. For a Vedantist all that experience with which science is concerned, is 'reduced' to the level of *vyavaharika*. And, of course, for him there can be even no question of interpreting *turiya* (essentially, yogic trance) within the limits of this experience. A scientist, admitting the presence of the fact of such a trance, will not at all be satisfied

by its introspective fixation and will strive to ascertain its physiological premises which generate its mechanisms of the highest nervous activity, its role in the overall dynamics of psychic processes, etc. For the Vedantist it is enough to go through the 'experience' of *turiya* and hypostasis of this—essentially, without doubt, dependent on specific material premises\*—psychic phenomenon, its transformation into the absolute. Vivekananda himself quite lucidly demonstrates the difference of the Vedantic understanding of 'experience' from the scientific, when he talks of *absolute* directness etc. of the realization of *Brahman* (see 8, 6, 430). However, in scientific knowledge in general, and in scientific experience in particular, the differentiation between the direct and the indirect is always *relative*, conventional, mobile.

#### CONCEPT OF MATERIAL UNITY

How is it with the second argument of Vivekananda ? Does Vedanta indeed 'realize' the scientific ideal of the unity of the world ? Of course, not. Just like 'experience', the notion of 'unity' in science and Vedanta means something different on principle. First, science establishes not the unity of the world in general, but its *material* unity. Secondly, science does so not by means of reducing the whole diversity of existing things to something completely homogeneous, abstractly-identical, but through ascertaining the deep mutual relationship of all things. But Vivekananda, above all, establishes (already at the level of *vyavaharika*) just the spiritual, and not the material, unity of the world. From his point of view, modern science stresses two most common principles of all existence—matter and force—and to these correspond the concepts of *akasha* and *prana* in Vedanta (see 8, 2, 32). But the interpretation of their mutual relations supposedly leads to the spiritual source 'uniting' them: 'We know that in science as we increase the velocity, the mass decreases; and as we increase the mass, the velocity

\*The so-called 'altered state of the consciousness', including yogic trance, is under study in a number of countries, with the application of the methods of electroencephalography (see 49, 76).

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decreases Thus we have matter and force. The matter, we do not know how, disappears into force, and force into matter. Therefore there is something which is neither force nor matter, as these two may not disappear into each other. This is what we call mind—the universal mind' (8, 8, 233). Here the existence of cosmic mind (*mahat*), identified by Vivekananda with *Isvara* (*Brahman* in its 'personal' revelation at the level of *vyavaharika*), 'is proved' essentially by simple repetition of one of the prevalent arguments of 'physical idealism' (based on false identification of the concepts of mass of rest and matter).

The second 'proof' of the 'spirituality' of the principle of the world (at the level of *vyavaharika*) rests on the ideological version of that theory of causality which in ancient India has been known as *satkaryavada* (the teaching of pre-existence of effect in cause). Vivekananda's view is like this: Since nothing can be created out of nothing, the consciousness discovered in the course of world evolution must be present in its very beginning. From this point of view, evolution is preceded by involution, but is 'hidden' in the course of involution, the source giving rise to evolution is the same *Mahat* or *Isvara* (see 8, 2, 208). How far this version of the theory of causality is not only idealistic but also metaphysical, is seen at least from the famous aphorism of Vivekananda: 'The Buddha is already involved in the mollusc !' (*ibid.*, 75)

### RELATION OF MATTER AND ENERGY

But the reduction of force and matter to the spiritual source uniting them, from the point of view of Vivekananda, is also not adequate. This spiritual source, we know, 'involutionizes' and evolutionizes in space and time, being associated with the bifurcation into the opposites and with the struggle between the opposing forces (*ibid.*, 373). Thus, in order to rise to complete homogeneity and unity, it is necessary to come out of the limits both of time and space, as well as out of the opposites associated with them and to aspire for the indefinite (*nirguna*) *Brahman*. But, having taken this step, it is difficult to

step back... it is impossible to interpret rationally the relation of *nirguna Brahman* and the world of numerous things. In the ultimate end reason must commit 'suicide' (see 8, 7, 164 and 65), so as to accept the 'indescribable' (*anirvacaniya*) fact of presence both of *nirguna Brahman* as well as the illusory world of *maya*.

*The second characteristic* of Vivekananda's philosophy is related to his aspiration to reconcile and harmonize various trends in Vedanta (*advaita*, *vishishhta-advaita*, *dvaita*). About this conciliation, he usually talks pathetically at times even speaking of it as one of the most important tasks of his life: 'I am born for this, and to do this—I am pre-ordained !' (quoted from 73, 304) True, the idea itself of such conciliation was essentially not new; it had been expressed by Vivekananda's preceptor, Ramakrishna, who believed that various forms of Vedanta reflected various stages of 'yogic experience'. But it is in Vivekananda precisely that it receives its fundamental significance, becomes the constant *leitmotiv* of his works, uniting into one the many aspects of his philosophical system. The significance of this idea in Vivekananda's *neo-Vedanta* is explained by a number of circumstances. First, it was the logical culmination of the tendency, noted also in Dayananda, of reconciling the traditional Indian philosophical systems with a view to demonstrating the 'solidarity' of Indian culture (in its contrast to the western). Secondly, this idea in many ways helped to establish, in theory, Vivekananda's teaching of 'universal religion' more concretely. It is just *advaita* which for him is the imagined ideal centre of the 'circle' of world religions and *dvaita* and *vishishhta-advaita*—the steps on the way to it. It is on these steps that he 'arranged' such religions as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism (see, for example, 8, 5, 64; 6, 88).<sup>\*</sup> Lastly, viz. thirdly, this idea has made it possible to synthesize a number of valuable (from Vivekananda's point of

<sup>\*</sup>Vivekananda, it is true, has his hesitations in assigning a specific religion to a specific form of Vedanta: thus, Christianity is placed by him sometimes under *dvaita*, sometimes under *vishishhta-advaita*. But Hinduism is in any case associated above all with *advaita*.

view), 'practical' tendencies, characteristic for those trends of Vedanta which were opposed to *advaita*—the tendencies finding expression, for example, in the teaching of the 'path of love' with its anti-quietistic motifs, etc.

#### UNITY OF FORMS OF VEDANTA

It is true that in establishing in more detail his thesis of the unity of forms of Vedanta, Vivekananda is faced with certain difficulties. The point is that for him this unity does not rest simply on psychological foundation (which was mostly characteristic for Ramakrishna). He tries to find a logical base for this unity, affirming that 'rising' to *advaita* (through *dvaita* and *vishish'ta-advaita*) is a transition not from falsehood to truth but from the truth of a 'lower' order to the 'higher' truth (see 8, 5, 132). All forms of Vedanta, from his viewpoint, reflect definite aspects of reality. But what sorts of ? It is not difficult to correlate *advaita* with existence at the level of *paramarthika*.—Vivekananda considers *vishishhta-advaita* the picture of the world, based on the manifestation of the Absolute at the level of *vyavaharika* (see 8, 8, 392). But what of *dvaita* ? Well, the third level of existence (*pratibhasika*) covers what is not universally significant, subjective, and cannot therefore be the basis for it. One of the possible solutions would be to accept the evolution of the spiritual principle of the world. True, Vivekananda does not accept this solution—neither *nirguna Brahman*, nor its higher manifestation, *Isvara*, goes through evolution. It is, however, interesting that Aurobindo Ghosh—who, also striving to reconcile the three forms of Vedanta, followed just the same path and associated these forms with the varieties of *Brahman*, generating this world, namely, with the three modifications of the 'highest reason',—calls Vivekananda his 'inspirer' in this respect (see 58, 684).

The 'reconciliatory' tendencies in Vivekananda's philosophy in regard to the non-*advaita* forms of Vedanta, were perceptible also in his treatment of such fundamental category as *maya*. In one of his interviews (1897) he indicates four possible treat-

ments of *maya*—(1) the ‘unreality’ of concrete things (‘formulated and named’—*namarupa*) in view of their transientness and variability compared with the eternally existent; (2) the ‘unreality’ of cosmos compared with the same eternally existent—in view of its periodical creation and destruction; (3) the ‘illusoriness’ of the world, in which the truly existent appears in the form of something else (just as a shell looks like silver, and a rope like a snake); (4) the complete illusoriness of the world, which is like the ‘son of a barren woman’ or like the ‘horns of a hare’ (see 8, 5, 134).\*

Vivekananda categorically rejects the fourth version of the treatment of *maya*, considering it the result of defective thinking, ‘confusing’ levels of *vyavaharika* and *pratibhasika* (and thereby dissociated from the version of *advaita* created by Gaudapada and in a vulgarized version defended already in the nineteenth century by the orthodox with most brilliantly expressed quietistic-pessimistic formulation). Vivekananda estimates the third version as an adequate expression of the views of Sankara; and, on the whole, has a positive attitude to it.

But, it is interesting that he regards both the first and the second versions completely *advaitist*. The reference essentially is to the views close to the conceptions of such medieval representatives of Vedanta as Bhaskara and Yadavaprakasha (the world really emerges from *nirguna Brahman*, and then dissolves in it). But these are the versions usually not related to *advaita*, these are the ‘intermediary stages’ of their own kind between *advaita* and *vishishta-advaita* (the highest reality is still the *nirguna* and *saguna Brahman*, but its manifestations already are not so illusory as simply transient). As emphasized by the Indian scholars of *neo-Vedanta*, and, in particular, by such an eminent historian of philosophy as S. Chatterjee, Vivekananda himself, in his works, frequently follows the treatment of *maya* just in the sense of acceptance of transientness and variability (and not non-reality) of the world (see 89, 270-2).

\*Elsewhere, Vivekananda adds to these traditional comparisons one more (fully in the spirit of Lewis Carroll)—‘headache without head’ (see 8, 2, 32).

## PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHING OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

It is interesting to note in this context that instead of the traditional advaitist understanding of *maya* as such, as neither real, nor unreal ('inexpressible'—*anirvacaniya*), there is often found in Vivekananda, in the later period of his work, a definition of *maya* as a combination of the real and the unreal, being and non-being (cf. the Platonic 'world of things').\*

### PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF PHILOSOPHY

*The third characteristic* of Vivekananda's philosophy lies in its practical character constantly emphasized by him. This needs to be explained. In fact, absolutely all systems of Indian philosophy (including of course, also the traditional Vedanta) are 'practical', that is, oriented towards the creation of a definite type of vital formulations. But Vedanta (particularly *advaita*), in its medieval, scholastic form, was a bit too esoteric, accessible only to a narrow circle of the initiated. Vivekananda tries to change the position: 'The time has come when you have to make it [Vedanta] practical. It shall no more be a Rahasya, a secret, it shall no more live with monks in cave and forests, and in the Himalayas; it must come down to the daily, everyday life of the people'. (8, 3, 427). 'We shall make the drum of *advaita* beat in all homes, in all markets, at the heights of the hills and in the plains !' he exclaims (quoted from 32, 26).

'Practical Vedanta', in his deep conviction, must inject into the simple people a confidence in their own powers, awaken in them the dormant sense of their dignity (we know, they all are 'divine'), help in the triumph of the ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity, based, from his viewpoint, on the idea of universal spiritual unity (see 8, 1, 320).

It is characteristic that Vivekananda stresses the need of being guided by these ideals in the concrete environment of life, and not simply assigning them to transcendental reality, remaining indifferent to what happens at the 'lower level' of

\*Such treatment of *maya* is, in the twentieth century, offered by Radhakrishnan.

existence. In this sense his constant statements in favour of equality are particularly important. Here is one of them: 'None can be Vedantist and at the same time admit of privilege to anyone, either mental, physical, or spiritual; absolutely no privilege for anyone. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the claim to privilege? All knowledge is in every soul, even in the most ignorant; he has not manifested it, but, perhaps, he has not had the opportunity, the environments were not, perhaps, suitable for him. When he gets the opportunity, he will manifest it. The idea that one man is born superior to another has no meaning in Vedanta; that between two nations one is superior and the other inferior has no meaning whatsoever'. (*ibid.*, 422)

The traditional concepts of *karma*\*, *samsara*, *moksha* find their own distinctive treatment in Vivekananda's 'Practical Vedanta'. The two last concepts will yet be talked of by us later. Here we shall dwell briefly only on his interpretation of *karma*—the law, controlling the 'transmigration of souls'. In the past the teaching of *karma* was often used for apologetic aims, as a justification for the social hierarchy, differences in status\*, privileges etc. To Vivekananda, with his persistent affirmation of equality, this is principally not acceptable. He is fully opposed to the fatalist treatment of *karma*, in particular to the idea that the present impoverished state of the lower strata of Indian society is pre-determined. The cowards and fools alone, from his point of view, seek to justify the existing position by referring to destiny; but the real aim of people on this earth is to realize that they are creators of their own destinies (see 8, 8, 184). Vivekananda writes of *karma* first of all as a law of relationship not so much of the present with the past as of the present with the future: '*Karma* is what pre-

\*In the Soviet historical-philosophical literature, R. B. Rybakov is the first to pay attention to the characteristics of Vivekananda's treatment of the concept of *karma* (see 34).

\*Such use of this theory was, however, characteristic not only of India. Cf., for instance, explanation of differences in the social status of people with the help of the theory of transmigration of souls in Plato's 'Fedra'.



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supposes the possibility and power to change what is taking shape' (97, 137). It is this urge for the future, this stress on the significance of human projects that is the most characteristic feature of understanding *karma* in Vivekananda's 'Practical Vedanta'. Besides, he conceives such projects not as purely individual. The reference first of all is to projects which must be carried out by some strata of society, or by the nation as a whole. Thus, he lays emphasis on the duty of the educated strata of the Indian society towards the masses and sees in the fulfilment of this duty their *karma* (*ibid.*, 701). Thus, what is still more typical is that he writes about the duty of all Indians, now living, to hundreds of generations of their ancestors who created such a rich and varied civilization. Those now living are responsible to them for the destiny of the nation, for its degradation or progress, for its glory or disgrace.

'Each of you',—says Vivekananda, addressing his Indian audience,—'was born with a splendid heritage, which is the whole of the infinite past life of your glorious nation. Millions of your ancestors are watching, as it were, every action of yours, so be alert' (8, 3, 152).<sup>\*</sup> Of course, such a concept as '*karma*', like a majority of the religious concepts, is principally ambivalent. And in Vivekananda, apart from the approach noted here, one can also find instances of traditional, conservative-apologetic treatment of *karma*. But the 'urge for the future' is nonetheless just characteristic of him. His aim, he believes, is 'not to idealize the reality existing, but to realize the ideal' (89, 344).

### WAYS TO FREEDOM: ILLUSIONS AND REALITY

All publications of the Ramakrishna Mission bear a wonderful emblem conceived by Vivekananda—the surface of a lake, covered with ripples, is illumined by the indirect rays of the

<sup>\*</sup>Vivekananda's ideas of *karma* as the principle of responsibility of those living now before the past and future generations, and also his interpretation of *karma* as not only individual (or collective) but also a national factor influenced the subsequent development of Indian philosophy. We find extremely similar notions in, for instance, Aurobindo Ghosh.

rising sun; clearly seen under these rays are a lotus flower and a white swan; the whole picture is encircled by the contours of a giant serpent. The swan in the centre is the symbol of the 'Supreme I', taken from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* which speaks of 'the radiant infinite being (*Purushah*) who moves alone (*eka hamsah*)' (4, 3, 11-12).

All other elements of the emblem symbolize various types of yoga: The waters of the lake covered with ripples—*karma-yoga* (yoga of action), the lotus—*bhakti-yoga* (yoga of love), the rising sun—*jnana-yoga* (yoga of knowledge), and lastly the big serpent—*raja-yoga* (Patanjali's ruling yoga, which, in view of its special significance, is sometimes simply referred to as yoga, which is the most extensively developed system of psycho-physical exercises and, at the same time, one of the six 'orthodox' philosophical schools of ancient India. The fact that Vivekananda gave such great importance to 'yogic practices', is not at all just accidental. If Vedanta, from his point of view, establishes the ideal of freedom, the said four yogas are the ways to it. The very choice of these ways is quite significant. The fact is that these do not at all exhaust the whole diversity of the types of 'yogic practices' existing in India. Vivekananda sometimes even writes about the 'infinite' ways of yoga (see 8, 6, 73).\*

If we take into account the fact, already rightly noted by Romain Rolland, that the *Raja-yoga* and *Jnana-yoga* of Vivekananda are directly related and form a single complex of its own kind (see 32, 41), then the main 'ways' are essentially three: ways of action, knowledge, love. And it is observed, first, that these are not the 'ways' which are talked of in the *Bhagavadgita* (and we have already seen above that the turning to the *Gita* in the nineteenth century Indian philosophy was extremely symptomatic). Vivekananda himself stands very firmly for the acceptance of quite special and unique significance of the *Gita* placing it even higher than the two other

\*B. Walker's Encyclopaedic Survey of Hinduism mentions the existence of at least seven main types of yoga (see 93, 2, 617).

parts of traditional 'triple base' of the Vedantists—the Upanishads and the Brahma sutras: 'The *Bhagavadgita* is the highest authority in Vedanta' (8, 7, 55). Secondly, the 'synthesis' of the yogas is logically related to the neo-Vedantist 'synthesis'. The commentators of the *Gita*, belonging to various trends of Vedanta, we know, gave priority sometimes to *karma*, sometimes to *jnana*, and sometimes to *bhakti-yoga*. The characteristic acceptance by Vivekananda of the 'righteousness' of the respective trends involved also the acceptance of the 'righteousness' of the type of yoga advocated by them. The parallelism, though, in Vivekananda's approaches to the types of Vedanta and types of yoga is not absolute: if in characterizing the former, priority is unconditionally given to *advaita*, in characterizing the latter the respective question is solved not so mechanically—the various types of 'yogic practices' have different correlations with one another depending upon the choice of the level at which the question is decided (it is interesting that one such level, and extremely substantial tool, is the 'conformity' of a type of yoga to the character of the historical period lived). Thirdly, Vivekananda constantly stresses that the main 'yogic ways' correspond to the peculiarities of the main psychological types of people, characterized by the possession of knowledge, emotions or wilful impulses in the over-all dynamics of their psychological life (see 8, 6, 123).

#### INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

The emotions, will, reason, are indeed the most important psychic components in the traditional Indian psychology (not substantially different, though, on this level, from the European psychology). And this means that the system of influences on wilful, emotional, and cognitive aspects of personality structures exhausts the possible means of re-orientation of individuals; but the essence of such re-orientation, from Vivekananda's point of view, must consist in reaching a 'spiritual balance' (*samata*) and 'indifference to passions' (*vairagya*). Each of the yogas attains this re-orientation in its own way, sometimes by

inciting the will to denounce egoistic and egocentric urges (*karma*-yoga), sometimes by directing all emotions to one higher object (*bhakti*-yoga), sometimes showing the insignificance of the transient compared with the eternal (*jnana*-yoga) (see 8, 3, 19).<sup>\*</sup> But the unity of the main yogas, according to Vivekananda, consists not only in the ultimate end (attainment of freedom) but also in the similarity of spiritual re-orientation made by them. These intertwine with each other, help each other: the combined operation of the three main forms of yoga is compared by Vivekananda with the co-ordination in the movement of two wings and tails in the flight of a bird (*ibid.*, 33). Here is hinted the idea of a single and 'complete' yoga—*purna*-yoga, which was later developed in the works of Aurobindo Ghosh.

#### YOGIC PRACTICES

After this brief survey of the mutual relations of various types of 'yogic practices' in Vivekananda, we shall now see how he characterizes each of them separately. And first we shall take up his characterization of the inter-related *raja*-yoga and *jnana*-yoga which, from his point of view, are also the most difficult (demanding mastery of a number of special exercises, art of thought concentration, art of differentiation of levels of existence etc.) though, on the other hand, meant for individuals developed greatest in the spiritual sense. Although the *Raja-yoga* published in New York in 1895 was for many years the most popular (outside India) work of Vivekananda and evoked the most ardent and immediate interest upon publication, of most diverse countries and most diverse thinkers—from Leo Tolstoy to one of the founders of pragmatism, W. James (see 33, 258), yet the exposition nonetheless of the 'eight-fold

<sup>\*</sup>As later noted by Aurobindo Ghosh in his works on yoga, an interesting parallel can be drawn between the given methods of 'self-control' and the methods of achieving 'indifference' in the three main schools of Hellenistic philosophy, also oriented respectively towards cognitive (sceptic), wilful (stoic), emotional (epicurean) components of personality structures. The radical difference lies, however, in this that the Indian methods of self-control are associated with religion.

means' of yoga in this book is on the whole fairly traditional and it essentially contains little that is new. Following Patanjali (translation of whose *yoga-sutras* was given as an appendix to the *Raja-yoga*), Vivekananda observes the need for 'ethical training' of those following the way of yoga, for observance by them of the system of moral precepts and writes (*yama* and *niyama*). Amongst the moral rules expounded in this connection are also the famous five 'great vows' ('moving' in Indian philosophy from one system to another—we shall find these, for instance, in such 'unorthodox' doctrines as of Jainism and Buddhism): not doing harm to a living being (*ahimsa*); righteousness (*satya*); not grabbing (*aparigraha*); not coveting the property of others (*asteya*) and lastly, complete abstinence (*brahmacharya*). This is followed by the description of yogic poses (*asana*), control of 'psychic energy' by breathing exercises (*pranayama*), diversion of feelings from their objects (*pratyahara*). It is, however, characteristic that Vivekananda pays comparatively less attention to the details of yogic 'techniques': in his view, the development of these details is the work of 'physical' (*hatha*) yoga (see 8, 1, 138), and for 'spiritual perfection' it is enough to master comparatively small complex of psycho-physical habits, creating favourable conditions for subsequent meditation (such as the skill to adopt easily the pose of 'lotus', which makes it possible to have continued relaxation of muscles and 'diverting' from the feeling of one's body, and also the skill to control the rhythm, by depth and tempo of breathing, which serves the analogous aims). The maximum importance is given by him to the exposition (see *ibid.*, 171-88) of so-called inner means of yoga, such as *dharana* ('fixing' the mind on the object of meditation), *dhyana* (the next process of meditation following thereafter), *samadhi* (the merging of the object and subject as a result of intensification of the given process).

With all the traditionality in some respects of its main content, Vivekananda's *Raja-yoga* is, to its advantage, different from the 'occult' literature on yogas flooding the world as a

result largely of the activity of the theosophists. Of the least interest to Vivekananda are the famous yogic 'miracles' which became one of the most saleable, though truly 'worthless', goods of the twentieth century. His attitude to these is as negative as to 'miracles' in general, and is revealed sometimes in the ironical observations made by him on gullible simpletons, and sometimes in condemnations of the quacks trying to make capital of human folly and ignorance. It is characteristic that in the letters to his disciples he asks them to expound the life of Ramakrishna, this most authoritative yogi of the nineteenth century, 'conscientiously avoiding all mention of miracles' (8, 4, 305).

#### SCIENCE OF CONTROL OVER HUMAN NATURE

Vivekananda seeks to present *raja*-yoga as a science of 'control over inner nature' (8, 1, 133). Here he takes notice of the possibility of consciously regulating with the help of yogic methods certain physiological and psychic processes which usually escape such control.\* Interestingly, Vivekananda interprets yoga as a method of changing mutual relations between the phenomena of consciousness (*vritti*) and the psychic phenomena pertaining to the sphere of the unconscious (*sankara, vasana*). Speaking about the dynamics of consciousness and the unconscious, he compares the former with the surface of the ocean and the latter with its depths (see 8, 6, 95) and advocates the need for investigating these depths and 'mastering' them.

Despite all this, the 'scientific' analogies (for instance, comparison of human body with electric battery 'charged' with psychic energy—*prana*—at the time of *pranayama* [see 8, 1, 161-62]) given by Vivekananda in his works on *raja*-yoga are most frequently nothing more than 'rationalizations' of

\*The study of this aspect of 'yogic practice' is now made (largely, for purposes of medical treatment) in a number of countries of the world, including the USSR. Such a study has yielded multiform methods of treatment, including the 'autogenous practice', 'the method of biofeedback' etc. (About these methods see, for instance, 31, 22-3; 49, 85).

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pre-scientific ideas. The problem of change of correlation between consciousness and the unconscious state in the course of yoga is interpreted in accordance with the main idealistic regulation as a component part of the broader problem of transition to the 'superconscious', that is to the state of *turiya* already described above (*ibid.*, 180).

In any case, the concept of 'superconsciousness' links *raja*-yoga with *jnana*-yoga. In full conformity with the Vedantist tradition Vivekananda isolates three main stage of the later: 'hearing' (*shravana*); the precepts of the teacher, and pondering over them (*manana*); and lastly, deep meditation (*nididhyasana*), making it possible to get into their true meaning (see 8, 8, 154). All this three-stage process can begin only if there is intuitive attainment of *Brahman* by the teacher (in the state of 'super-consciousness'), and ends with the appearance of the respective intuition in the disciple.

### REFORMIST MOTIF

We are already familiar with the content of the Vedantist 'knowledge' about *Brahman* and *maya* in Vivekananda's interpretation. But the concern in *jnana*-yoga is not only with the conduct of man. Since, as Vivekananda affirms, the 'super-consciousness', being the 'most obvious' for him who achieves it, is at the same time the 'least obvious' for the others, the achievement by somebody of this state can be judged not from words (which may hide conceit or self-conceit) but from the work on the change of orientation of the person, of his deep regulations (see 8, 5, 227). The person who has attained 'superconsciousness' is, according to Vivekananda, completely alien to all evil; he need not waste his energy to counter the bad influences, since the latter simply cannot appear in him (see 8, 2, 284). This ideal of the *jnana*-yogi, above all, is contrasted by Vivekananda (in the spirit of the *Gita*) with the ritualist, with the person who places the 'letter' of the scripture, the ritual and mythological side of religion, above intuitive 'knowledge' (8, 6, 155). And here comes out the 'reformist'

motif already familiar to us in his philosophy. But the ideal of the *jnana-yogi* and the understanding of 'knowledge' as a source, transforming the spiritual orientation of a person, are, on the other hand, contrasted by him with the narrowly pragmatic approach to knowledge as something useful for outward purposes but changing nothing in the person himself (see 8, 3, 50). It is interesting that Vivekananda fixes in this connection the fact actually occurring in the contemporary society, of peculiar 'alienation' of knowledge when the latter functions in a 'ready form' as a 'changed coin' of its own kind, and is accordingly perceived by those individuals 'making use' of it, who partly, perceiving, without proof, the results of scientific work, do not in any way align themselves either to this work or to scientific thought proper. From Vivekananda's viewpoint, such type of 'consumers' of knowledge regard scientists as priests and scientific knowledge as an object of faith, and this gives rise to a 'scientific' mythology and a 'scientific' ritual of its own kind (see 8, 2, 27). But all analogies are relative, and Vivekananda (with all the subtlety of his observation) is not right when he absolutizes it so much that he virtually places on par (see 77, 68) the prejudices of the 'consumers' of scientific knowledge, resulting from a definite type of attitude to science (cultivated and widespread in specific social conditions), and the prejudices of religions related to the very essence of this form of social consciousness.

#### QUIETISTIC INTERPRETATIONS

In his polemics with quietistic interpretations of *jnana-yoga*, Vivekananda constantly stresses that the change in orientation taking place in *jnana-yoga*, does not involve any need of 'departing from the world' and leaving 'worldly' affairs (see 8, 8, 7). His talk with the American agnostic philosopher R. Ingersoll (see 8, 7, 75) throws light on his understanding of practical behavioural function of Vedantist 'knowledge'. Reacting to the observation made jokingly by Ingersoll on 'the need for an attitude to life without any metaphysics',—like



'squeezing an orange dry',—Vivekananda says clearly that his Vedantist position enables him to do this better. And Vivekananda explains that the philosophising individualist, seeking to obtain from life all that is possible, lives in constant hurry and fear which form a close circle of its own kind (the fear of 'not being able to' stimulates hurry, and hurry, constantly reminding of the limitedness of the time of existence, in its turn, intensifies fear). Besides, concentration on one's own experiences impoverishes one's life, excluding the infinite world of experiences of other people. The *jnani* who, knowing about one and eternal *I*, is free from fear and hurry and is not confined in his own narrow world, is, in Vivekananda's view, free from all this. As a result he can 'squeeze the orange dry without losing even a single drop of juice. . . .'

The rejection of quietistic interpretation of *jnana*-yoga enables Vivekananda to bring it closer (in the spirit of the *Gita*) to *bhakti*-yoga and *karma*-yoga. At times he notes the peculiar relationship of knowledge and love. Thus, he observes, Ramakrishna was a 'bhakta from outside and a *jnani* inside; and I am just the opposite' (quoted from 33, 51). Only a combination of knowledge and love, in his view, makes a man Mahatma—the 'great soul'; reversely, he is a *duratma*, who is 'a spoiled soul' (see 8, 5, 45).

Expounding the principles of *bhakti*-yoga, Vivekananda rests on the classical works of Ramanuja. First of all, after Ramanuja, he distinguishes between the lower (*apara*) and the higher (*para*) stages of 'way of love'. The lower stage includes the differentiation (*viveka*) between pure and impure food, freedom from desires (*vimoha*), fulfilment of rites (*abhyasa*), doing good (*kriya*), moral purity (*kalyana*) and spiritual cheerfulness (*anavasada*) (see 8, 4, 1-9). The higher stage consists in cultivation of devotion to divine source which appears first as a silent worship (*shanta*) and then 'absorbs' all shades of emotions felt by the devoted servant for the master, by the friend for the friend, by the mother for the child, and lastly, by the lover for the beloved (see 8, 3, 93-9).

SIGNIFICANCE OF 'DOING GOOD'

Commenting on this traditional arrangement, Vivekananda, after his teacher Ramakrishna, fully stresses the significance of 'doing good' (*kriya*): 'There is no higher virtue than charity. The lowest man is he whose hand draws in, in receiving; and he is the highest man whose hand goes out in giving. The hand was made to give always. Give the last bit of bread you have, even if you are starving' (8, 4, 8-9). But here he deviates from the prevalent philanthropic notions, asserting that 'good deeds' done by the representatives of 'higher' strata of society for the representatives of the 'lower' strata with a humiliating sense of superiority, lead only to moral degradation of both (see 8, 3, 305). Like Ramakrishna, Vivekananda also emphasizes the tendency of the teaching of *bhakti* against the division of the members of society into 'lower' and 'higher', against privileges, against caste hierarchy. '.... A soul has no caste!'—he declares in one of his talks about *bhakti*-yoga (8, 7, 32). This motif of equality is constantly found in Vivekananda, even when one takes up the details of the 'way of love'. Thus, speaking about differentiation (*viveka*) between pure and impure food, he insists that he has in mind the need of observance of sanitary-hygienic and psycho-physiological (not using highly exciting dishes, befouling drinks etc.) rules. But with all the force of his volcanic temperament he invariably condemns the traditional rule of observance of 'caste purity' considering it as the outcome of 'a mad and crank fanaticism which completely drove religion to the kitchen' (8, 3, 66).

Along with the anti-feudal motif of equality in the works of Vivekananda on *bhakti*-yoga, there also resounds another motif: greedlessness and self-oblivion are contrasted by him to the calculating-commercial spirit of the 'new times'. 'We are all traders'; he writes with sorrow,—'we are traders in life, we are traders in virtue, we are traders in religion. And alas! we are also traders in love'. And Vivekananda builds a 'ladder of love' of its own kind: on the lowest rung of this ladder are people who seek to get something from the object

of their feelings, giving nothing in return; on the second are those who are guided by the principle of mutual profit; and only on the third, the highest, and the really loving, not thinking of any reward for their feelings. It is just these last who are the real *bhaktas*, and their love can be compared with the love of the midge for the flame that burns it (see 8, 7, 7).

With the same motif of greedlessness and self-oblivion is associated the constantly repeated image of 'triangle of *bhakti*' in Vivekananda. In his words, just as there is no triangle without the three sides, there also is no real love without three conditions—absence of calculation on the part of the lover; his fearlessness (when there is danger for the beloved); absence of jealousy and rivalry (since the beloved is regarded as the embodiment of an ideal and not as an object of convenience). This type of feeling, according to Vivekananda, practised in *bhakti-yoga*, must be felt for individuals, communities, countries, and lastly, for the entire mankind (see 8, 3, 86-90 and 72). True, all this, traditionally, is at best a small step on way to God, but 'God', whose worship Vivekananda calls for, is far from being a transcendental being. 'I would have liked to worship the only God that exists, the only God in whom I believe, the aggregate of everything animated; and above all my God, consisting of the humiliated, the unfortunate and the deprived people of all races and societies, is a special object of my worship (89, 280-81).

Vivekananda stresses in every way the value of *bhakti-yoga* as the simplest and the most accessible of yogas (see 8, 3, 32), demanding neither any outstanding intellectual capacities nor any special qualities of will. But he does see also its 'shady sides', 'dangers'. One of these consists in that *bhakti-yoga* was most of all associated with mythological and ritual aspect of religion, and this means that it can lead, at its 'lower' stages, to intolerance and fanaticism (see *ibid.*, 33). Another danger, from Vivekananda's point of view, is the tendency of sentimental weakness appearing in the *bhaktas*. After visiting one of the Vaisnavite festivals, he regretfully characterizes the

Bengalis as a people, dyspeptic, given to buffoonery to the accompaniment of *tamburas* and singing of *kirtans* in a sentimental way (quoted from 33, 293).

Vivekananda's fourth yoga, viz. *karma-yoga*, demanding above all courage, forbearance, strength, makes it possible to avoid this danger. Vivekananda often writes of strength as one of the foremost moral and spiritual virtues of man, and of weakness as the greatest evil (see 8, 7, 76 and 52). In his words, the 'weak have no place here, in this life or in any other life. Weakness leads to slavery. . . . Weakness is death' (see 8, 2, 3). And it is not just accidentally that Vivekananda regards the *karma-yoga* as the most suitable for the contemporary period, calling it after Ramakrishna '*kali-yuga*', 'the iron age', with its unprecedented range of human activity as well as the acuteness of social contrasts (see 8, 4, 257).

#### ATTITUDE TOWARDS MATERIALISM

It is characteristic that Vivekananda lets even atheists take up the 'five actions' (unlike the previous 'ways') (see 8, 1, 84). With all his theoretical opposition to ideas of materialism and atheism he has a more than tolerant attitude towards atheists. His statements about them are at times so paradoxical that these literally shock the representatives of religious orthodoxy: 'I have met in my life a great number of persons, full of a sound sense and spirituality, who did not at all believe in God. . . and they perhaps understood God *better* (italics mine.--author) than we can sometime manage to' (quoted from 32, 67). All people (both believers as well as atheists) are, from Vivekananda's viewpoint, divided into four types depending upon the impulses latent in their actions. At the lowest rung in the 'ladder of spiritual development' are those who do evil for the sake of evil, intoxicated by it as such. The second rung is occupied by those who do evil to others for the sake of their own good. At the third rung are those who do good to others with even when there is no selfish interest therein but provided there is also no harm to their own selves. And lastly, viz. at the

fourth (the highest) rung are those who regard life as a sacrifice and strive for the good of others even if it brings harm to them (see 8, 1, 83). The persons of the fourth type, according to Vivekananda, are just those who follow the 'way of action' (knowingly or unknowingly).

Following the *Gita*, Vivekananda considers essential for *karma*-yogis greedless and unrepachable fulfilment of the task they are meant for. In this connection he cites the famous formula of 'leaving the fruits of action', explaining that it means the need first of throwing away such motifs ('external' to the task fulfilled) as the urge for enrichment, fame, consolidation of position in society etc. (see *ibid.*, 30), and secondly, to devote one's strength fully to one's work, without becoming weak by hesitations and doubts in regard to the final results of their efforts and their ultimate significance (see *ibid.*, 31). The fulfilment of these requirements, from Vivekananda's point of view, not only secures the highest effectivity in the chosen type of activity but also turn people into 'moral giant' combining 'intensive activity' with the greatest peace (see *ibid.*, 30-32).

Vivekananda's works of *karma*-yoga have a great deal of interesting riddles on the active essence of man. Thus, he writes about the embodiment of human powers and capacities in 'machines', 'cities', 'ships' (8, 1, 28), in the same way as about the possibility of 'extracting' these embodied powers only as a result of activity (see 8, 1, 28, 29). And Vivekananda is sharply opposed to those who, from his point of view, obstruct the correct fulfilment of this activity. First, against the medieval quietistic ideal: 'inactivity should be avoided by all means' (*ibid.*, 38). Secondly, against the distortion of correlation between the subject and the object of activity: 'We are caught, though ourselves tend to catch. We intend to control, but are being controlled. We intend to do the work, but we are being worked' (8, 2, 2). Such a distortion is also due to the dominance over man of products of his own activity, as a result of which there crops up the indignation: 'Does man create laws or do

laws create man? Does man create fame and position in society, or do fame and position in society create man?' (8, 5, 365). In a number of places of this type Vivekananda fixes fully the real situation of alienation for the society of his time. But his works on *karma*-yoga explain this situation largely through psychology: The cause of everything is the power of *avidya* (ignorance). Accordingly, the escape too lies in bringing about a change not so much in the surrounding world as in one's ownself: 'I have no control of the external world, but that which is in me and nearer unto me, my own world, is in my control' (8, 2, 7).

But this 'inner change' can be fully harmonized with the fairly conservative approach to reality. Just such an approach was also characteristic for the traditional-scholastic treatments of *karma*-yoga: there exists a firm cosmic and social order, and the whole question is of playing one's part in the world-orchestra well, according to rules. . .'

The 'freedom', which can be talked of within the limits of such an approach, is essentially extremely restricted, and the ideas about its 'absoluteness' are illusory. This is 'freedom from' (passions, desires, doubts etc.), but not 'freedom for'—it, we know, is not linked with the change of natural and social reality, with realisation of new human projects in nature and society, with liquidation of situations of alienation (and not simply of their psychological correlatives) really formed and related to the dominance of personal property.

But Vivekananda would not have been what he is and would not have been that national symbol and guiding star for millions of Indians fighting for their bright future, if he would have remained confined to the narrow limits of the said approach. And he does not keep himself to these narrow limits. His thought moves towards ever new horizons in a complex and at times odd way, surmounting the traditional and hackneyed arrangements. Not being satisfied with the propaganda of 'inner change' in people, he talks of his 'ardent urge to change the existing position' in India (77, 110-11). The peculiar

'bridge', the link between these two transformations—inner and outer—is established in his system with the help of the new interpretation of the traditional concept of *moksha* ('liberation').

'UNIVERSAL LIBERATION' AND IDEAL OF KARMA-YOGI

The ultimate aim of all yogas, including also of *karma-yoga*, for Vivekananda, as also for any Vedantist, is the 'liberation' from the fetters of *karma* and from the ignorance (*avidya*) that 'obscures' consciousness, and the 'realisation' of the unity of the individual and the world spirit. But Vivekananda insists that the ideal of the *karma-yogi* must be not personal but universal 'liberation'. 'Do you think, so long as one *Jiva* endures in bondage, you will have any liberation?'—he asks in a talk with his disciples. And further: 'Individual liberation is not the real and perfect form of liberation, but *universal* and *collective* liberation is true *mukti* (that is, perfect liberation; emphasis mine.—author)' (8, 7, 233-34). The idea does not *prima facie* appear so new. In fact we find some such thing, for instance, in *Mahayana* Buddhism which enjoins on the *bodhisattvas* to follow the ideal of 'saving' others and accordingly deferring their own 'salvation'. The notions akin to this are also developed in the teaching about the *avatars* of the deities, 'appearing on this earth' for 'saving' people etc. But Vivekananda does not simply reiterate old ideas. First, he thinks of 'universal liberation' as some process attainable at a specific *moment* of history (*bodhisattvas* and *avatars* 'saved' people gradually, in the course of unspecified time intervals): We find in him an interesting analogy between these historical moments and the 'boiling point of water' reached after the specific time needed (see 8, 8, 26). Secondly, sharing the *advaita* teaching about the possibility of 'saving' during life time (*jivanmukti*), and not after death, he believes that the 'liberation' described above will be achieved within society (and not outside it)—and hence the characterization of *moksha* as *collective* and not only universal. In one of Vivekananda's works we find the following wonderful description of this *society of jivanmuktas*: '...All

struggle, hatred, rivalry will disappear. All evil will disappear forever. The gods will then live on this earth. This earth itself will be converted into heaven' (8, 2, 287).

Thirdly, with all purely abstract and metaphysical character of such an ideal, he permitted the raising of the question of the need not only of 'inner' but also 'outer', not only individual, but also *social* premises of its achievement.

And Vivekananda does include in such premises the need for creating minimum of material conditions for all people, making it possible to avoid poverty, starvation, disease, and thereby helping in awakening 'spiritual' interests in them. Thus, in India, where the masses are in extremely poor material position, the primary task—from the point of view also of concern for their spiritual state—is to improve their lot (see 8, 3, 149-50). In one of the talks with his disciples Vivekananda says that in India there is neither *bhoga* (satiation of one's needs) nor yoga. When someone is satiated with *bhoga*, only then will he grasp and love the beauty of yoga (see 8, 5, 295). Accordingly, he puts forth a programme of action for *karma-yogis* in the 'iron age', including in it four points: (1) spread of 'spiritual' knowledge (of the ideas of *neo-Vedanta*); (2) publicizing the attainments of science and the education of the masses; (3) fight against disease; (4) fight against starvation (see 8, 3, 167-68). He gives quite special, exclusive importance to the education of the masses. While still in America (1894), he in his letters expressed the idea (which to many of his contemporaries seemed not only unexpected but also paradoxical) that thousands of young sannyasis should be deputed to go 'to people', equipped with globes, geographical pictures, 'magic lanterns' and chemical reactives to give them not only spiritual but also secular education (see 8, 5, 29). From his point of view, the ignorance of the masses and the existence of 'monopolies of knowledge' in higher strata of society are one of the foremost causes of poor position of India, and the escape therefore lies in liquidating this monopoly (see 8, 4, 415). Vivekananda contrasts to his project of 'universal educa-



tion' the system of education existing in India, combining in it surprisingly the features of the old, traditionally-scholastic, and new, 'Anglo-Indian' systems. First to be really universal, education must, from Vivekananda's viewpoint, be free, and be also without any discrimination on account of caste, religious, national or any other affiliation. Vivekananda also believes that equality of opportunity to receive education is the pre-requisite of all other equalities (see 8, 8, 94). Secondly, it is necessary to change substantially the content and meaning of the education process: to learn not only what is required for attaining and retaining all social status, for successfully passing through stages of various types of service hierarchies, but also what is useful to the common people in their day to day life and labour activity (see 89, 488-89). Lastly, viz. thirdly, it is necessary to achieve an organic unity of education and upbringing. And in this connection Vivekananda contests first the idea of education as purely mechanical transfer of some knowledge of the other, from the head of the teacher to the heads of the pupils, the educational method of 'intellectual drill' associated with such a concept, so characteristic both for the orthodox-scholastic, and for the Anglo-Indian systems of education. In his words, 'to be educated does not mean to receive a certain amount of information which is injected into your brain and lies there undigested for whole of your life. One must seek to assimilate ideas which change life, make a man, make his character. If you have mastered six objects and put them in your life and character, you have more knowledge than a man who has committed to memory a whole library of books. . . . If education were identical with the possession of information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world, and the encyclopaedias would have played the role of rishis' (89, 475). Vivekananda is very sharply opposed to the so-called negative teaching, typical of the 'Anglo-Indian' system of education, abusing and undermining all that is national, patriotic, Indian. 'We have been taught that we are nothing,'—he painfully writes.—'It is seldom admitted that

great people generally could be born in our country. Nothing positive is taught to us....' (89, 489). And at another place he observes that the protagonists of the method of 'negative teaching' consider it their foremost duty 'to show' to their subjects that their fathers and grandfathers were fools and mad (sec 8, 3, 301). The outcome of 'negative teaching', in Vivekananda's view, is cynicism and lack of confidence in one's powers. The aims of real education, as he assumes, are directly opposite to help people to believe in themselves, to understand themselves, to learn human dignity (see 8, 4, 308).

Of course, the project of 'universal education' formulated by Vivekananda (as is hardly) not the most important means of deliverance from the calamities of the period, and the idea of the possibilities of its realisation by self-sacrificing efforts of *karma*-yogis are largely utopian. But the programme offered by him for restructuring education undoubtedly has inherent in it humanism and democratism. Many ideas of Vivekananda relating to education have not lost their relevance even to this day; these enjoy considerable popularity and evoke great interest in modern India (see, for example, 89, 471-94).

Although the circle of immediate tasks of *karma*-yogis marked by Vivekananda, is comparatively narrow, he does not confine himself to this circle and expresses a number of thoughts playing a primary role in the discussion going on in the country about the need for social changes, about the ways of political development etc. It is true, the protagonists of social reforms have often reproached him with indifference towards their work and sometimes also with conservatism (see, for instance, 97, 421-22), observing that his speeches abroad do at times justify the outlived customs, and those in India have a great deal of bitter irony with regard to the activity of the reformists. True, he himself often in fairly strong accents, denied his interest in politics: '...I do not believe in any politics. God and truth are the only politics in the world' (quoted from 33, 285). And the protagonists of the reforms were at the same time, in the ultimate end, obliged to make the extremely characteristic

admission: 'The Swami is more radical than most of us' (97, 437). And, himself 'indifferent' to politics, Vivekananda declared that it was first necessary to 'flood' the country with spiritual ideas for 'flooding' it later with political ideas (see *ibid.*, 384).

We shall examine more closely these glaring 'discrepancies', primarily those with which Vivekananda's differences and at times conflicts with the protagonists of reforms in India are associated. First, the circumstance that Vivekananda, understanding fairly well the rottenness of mediæval norms of conduct and custom (and we already had the possibility of being convinced how bitterly he opposed the traditions which were keeping the Indian society fettered) does, as a rule, avoid the criticism of these norms and customs abroad. About the motives impelling him to this, he expresses himself unambiguously: 'The mission of my life is not to be a paid slanderer' (quoted from 47, 378). Secondly, Vivekananda found the methods used by the reformists humiliating for the Indian people, for, while fighting against some outlived customs, they partly turned for help to British powers, depending on their orders and on the colonial apparatus for the implementation thereof. Vivekananda calls such methods 'ruinous' or 'negative' (on the analogy of methods of negative teaching) and contrasts with these the 'positive' method of transformation of society carried out 'from inside' and not 'from outside', by the people themselves and not by their 'trustees' and 'patrons'. 'My ideal is growth, movement towards broader horizons, development on national base' (89, 380). But the change carried out 'from inside' is possible only under the conditions of freedom (see *ibid.*, 382). Thirdly, Vivekananda found too narrow those tasks which were given most frequent priority by the then reformists, and he saw this narrowness in the 'apex' character of the respective projects which did not touch the more substantial aspects of the life of the Indian people. Here is one of his typical statements on this point: 'Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathiser in

*every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the condition of the masses. . .*' (8, 5, 25-26). Thus, Vivekananda differs from the liberal-reformist circles of his time not at all in that he takes a conservative stand on the issue of reforms but in that, not satisfied with changes, piecemeal and made from the top, he demands radical changes carried out with the participation of the masses and for the sake of improving the conditions of their life. It is this circumstance that also elucidates Vivekananda's negative statements directed against 'politics' and 'politicians'. The point is that the reference here essentially is to the policy of liberal leaders of the then Indian National Congress, concerned not so much over the impoverished position of the people as over how to have extended the economic and political rights of the top hierarchy of the Indian bourgeoisie and landlords. And herefrom Vivekananda's thesis that 'politics, howsomuch one may not take it up, will be useless so long as the masses of India are not satisfied, educated and provided for'. (*ibid.*, 152) It is characteristic that, with all his negative attitude to 'politics', Vivekananda does nonetheless touch, in some form or the other, the most central, the most substantial and widely discussed questions of political development of India. Here, as one can easily be convinced, in the polemics between the liberal leadership of the Indian National Congress and the petty bourgeois democratic, 'extremist' opposition, his sympathies are wholly on the side of the latter.

One of the key issues in this polemics was that of methods of political activity: the liberals considered it expedient to turn constantly to colonial powers with various types of petitions, the 'extremists' stood for the need for 'self-help'. And what is characteristic here is that Vivekananda bitterly ridicules the hopes pinned by the liberals on the 'power' of the petitions: 'The fools hold meetings to gain greater power from the hands of the British. The British will only scoff at. . . The slaves desire power to subjugate other slaves' (8, 4, 313). In the talks with

his disciples, he calls Indian liberals 'poor, asking for alms' and speaks of the vanity of requests of this kind (see 8, 5, 248). And here is a completely unambiguous statement on the need for 'self-help': 'But you must not depend on any *foreign help*. Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism.' (*ibid.*, 83).

The comparison of a nation with individuals in the given case is by no means accidental. The point is that Vivekananda tries to link his thesis of 'self-help' of nations with the thesis of 'self-help' of *karma*-yogis, counting on their own powers for fulfilling the tasks before them and 'believing' in their own potentials. . . .

Another most important point in the polemics between the liberals and the 'extremists' was the issue of whether India should gain real political *independence* (*swaraj*) or only self-rule within the British empire. Vivekananda's position on this issue too is completely unambiguous. In his talk with one of the Bengali revolutionary leaders, Hemchandra Ghosh, he speaks of the need 'to pay the foreign usurpers back in their own coin' and to 'liberate the citadel of Eastern culture from the palpus of foreign octopus' (quoted from 52, 333).

It is characteristic that in a number of his speeches Vivekananda calls for preserving national traditions and national characteristics of India ('national idea') in the course of her further development, contrasting this thesis with that of the liberals about the desirability of 'imitating' the British order (see 8, 5, 347-49). Here he again draws a parallel between nations and individuals in the spirit of the teaching of the *Gita*, enjoining on the *karma*-yogis to follow their own duty (*svadharma*) and not that of others.

Lastly, the third important point in the polemics of liberals and 'extremists' was the question of admissibility of use of force in the liberation struggle. And here we find in Vivekananda a whole series of interesting statements of the correlation of violence and non-violence, which in many ways presaged the ideas developed in detail by the leaders of extremism in the

early twentieth century. Having a high regard for the traditional ideal of non-violence, he at the same time considers not only utopian, but also harmful, any doctrine asking for denouncing fully and at once all reply to force by force—such denouncing, in his view, would have catastrophic consequences (see 8, 1, 35). ‘Before reaching this highest ideal, man’s duty is to resist evil,’—writes Vivekananda,—‘let him work, let him fight,... Then only, when he has gained the power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue’ (*ibid.*, 37). At another place, referring to the authority of the Hindu ‘Scripture’ Vivekananda defends the need for not ‘swallowing injury and insult’ and for fighting heroically against the offenders: ‘only the heroes enjoy peace’ (8, 5, 351). Despite the fact that such ideas were expressed by Vivekananda not in connection with concrete political tasks but within the framework of comparatively abstract moral judgements, these were perceived by the patriotically minded Indians as a slap on the face of the liberals, shirking cowardly before the demonstration of strength from the side of the colonial powers.

The ‘politicalisation’ of Vedanta, so characteristic for the extremist leaders like B. G. Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh, was thus essentially done by Vivekananda despite all his outwardly proclaimed ‘indifference to politics’. The ‘enigmatic’ fact, as Hemchandra Ghosh recollects, that the Bengali youth considered Vivekananda ‘rather an astute politician, than a religious preceptor’ becomes understandable in the light of what has been said here (52, 335).

#### THE CONTOURS OF THE FUTURE

### 1. Stages of History

The self-sacrificing struggle of the *karma*-yogis for ‘universal liberation’ is, according to Vivekananda, unfolding itself in *Kali-yuga*, that is, in the ‘iron age’, and if one proceeds from purely traditional Hindu notions about periods of world history,

such a struggle would have to be taken to be foredoomed to failure. In fact, according to these notions, history moves along the downward line, and its four periods coming one after the other (*satya-*, *trita-*, *dvapara-*, and *kali-yuga*) are only stages of degradation, decomposition of social order, moving towards complete anomy. This circumstance is already symbolized by traditional colour symbols of the *yugas*: the white colour of the *satya-yuga* (after the purple and yellow colours coming 'in the interval') is replaced by the black in *kali-yuga* (see 93, 1, 6-7). On its path 'from light to darkness', mankind, according to the Hindu tradition, reaches such loss of moral potential, gets involved in so much of unsolvable contradictions and conflicts that the only escape lies in its ruin, the various versions of which are eloquently described in such mythological works as the Puranas popularizing the ideas of the Vedas (see 17, 163-64). True, a new cycle of history begins later, but it also ends in the same way; and in this inexorable succession of events there is place for 'universal destruction', but by no means for 'universal liberation....' This whole dismal picture is closely linked with the concept of 'rotation of souls' in *sansara*, also excluding (in any case, on global scale) the idea of progress. Vivekananda often gives this traditional concept its due, and then the attempt to make a radical change in social relations is pessimistically appraised by him as an effort 'to straighten a dog's tail' or to be free from chronic rheumatism by applying medicines alternately to various muscles. This is particularly characteristic of his earlier (dating from early 90's) works (see 8, 1, 77, and 2, 94). But the ideal of 'universal liberation' put forward by him, in so far as it is regarded as realizable on principle, made him introduce substantial correctives into the traditional understanding of *sansara* (as applicable to History). Vivekananda affirms the possibilities of social progress on global scale (see, for example, 8, 3, 269).

The new notions about the course of history found their expression in the scheme of historical development put forward by him. We first find this scheme in his letter of 1 November

1896 to one of his disciples, Mary Hale (see 8, 6, 342-44). A detailed commentary on it was given by Vivekananda in his article *Modern India* published in March 1899 (see 8, 4, 371-413).

In its development, mankind, according to Vivekananda, passes through four stages distinguished by as to which group of persons (*varna*) is in power. These are the periods of dominance of the Brahmins (priests), Ksatriyas (warriors), Vaisyas (traders) and Sudras (the working part of the population). It is characteristic that it is exactly in the order in which these *varnas* appear in the front place in the course of history that these are placed on the ladder of social hierarchy in ancient Indian society: History thus turns out to be a process of constant rise upwards of those who earlier occupied the lower rungs. If one takes into account the circumstance that Vivekananda, in the context of antiquity, shared the ideas of the highest moral virtues of the Brahmins (see 8, 3, 293), it may appear that his scheme is already not so far removed from the traditional ideas of the scheme of the *yugas*: at the top 'come' people with the lowest moral qualities. This impression gets strengthened on familiarizing with the criticism of the state of morals in the modern period so characteristic of Vivekananda.

But on a closer scrutiny it appears that Vivekananda's teaching about the stages of historical process differs considerably on a great number of points from the traditional teaching, and sometimes is even in direct contrast to it.

First, Vivekananda does not by any means believe that the changes occurring in History can be fully understood with the help of traditional ideas of moral regress. From his point of view, each of the historical stages coming one after the other has both specific shortcomings as well as aspects 'constituting its glory.' Thus, the substitution of the dominance of Brahmins by that of Ksatriyas leads to the development of secular culture and fine arts. The dominance of Vaisyas is associated with the development of material culture and wide exchange of material favours and ideas. It is characteristic that the rise upwards of



those who earlier stood at lower rungs of social hierarchy is regarded by Vivekananda as a positive process on the whole, and this is why he welcomes the historical completion of this process, viz. the coming to power of the Sudras (see 8, 6, 342-43). How far Vivekananda essentially goes from the traditional (for India) cyclic understanding of history, is seen at least from the fact that, speaking of an 'ideal model' of its own kind of society, he places it not in the past (the first stage is that of dominance of Brahmins), but in the future in which, from his point of view, there must be achieved optimum combination of the merits of the four periods of history—viz. of spiritual knowledge, secular culture, necessary amount of material favours, equality etc. Thus, History is not so much an aggregate of circles as an 'ascent' towards something higher, dialectically 'removing' the previous stages to social state....

Secondly, in Vivekananda, unlike the traditional abstract-moralistic scheme, the fight amongst the *varnas* turns out to be the moving force of historical process. Here there is in him a regular reference not only to the rivalry of the dominant groups (for example, Brahmins and Ksatriyas or Ksatriyas and Vaisyas), but also to the mutual relations between these groups and main mass of population. According to his thinking, some 'upper' *varnas* could win over their opponents and remain in power only by depending upon the support of the masses and, on the other hand, losing this support, they also lost their power (see 8, 4, 403-04). It is just the 'common masses', from Vivekananda's point of view, who constantly remained the 'real base' of society and the 'source of all strength' in it (see *ibid.*, 400 and 403).

These judgements no doubt have vague enigmas both about the decisive role of the masses in History as well as about the significance of class struggle. But these are, of course, just enigmas, and nothing more. The very concept of *varna*, we know, is far from agreeing with the concept of class. By wrongly applying this concept, taken from ancient Indian history, to the whole mankind, Vivekananda later arrives at a number of

extremely characteristic aberrations. From his point of view, *varnas* exist eternally, their existence is linked not only with economic (division of labour), but also with 'spiritual' need (securing of moral perfection), the struggle between them is due not only to and even not so much because of economic factors but also to the political (pursuit of power) and the 'spiritual' ('monopoly for knowledge' and the tendency for its destruction) etc.

Finally, the third characteristic of Vivekananda's teaching about the stages of historical process consisted in that in it (unlike the traditional Indian scheme) considerable place is occupied by the problem of the mutual relation of the East and the West, the Indian and the West European civilization. The point is that its 'empire of Vaisyas' is essentially the bourgeois society contemporary to him in the countries of the West. The preceding stages, however, in 'classical' form were presented, from his viewpoint, in the course of Indian history. But, speaking of the future, Vivekananda considers essential the comparison of the results of development of both civilizations, in order to try to achieve the 'synthesis' of their best aspects.

## 2. East and West

In his article *Modern India*, Vivekananda very eloquently describes the wonder and confusion with which millions of Indians followed the earliest successes of the 'gentlemen of success' from the East India Company: 'A handful of Vaisyas (traders) who, despite their great wealth, have ever crouched awe-stricken not only before the king but also before any member of the royal family, would unite, cross rivers and seas for purposes of business would, solely by virtue of their intelligence and wealth, by degrees make puppets of the long-established Hindu and Mohammedan dynasties;... this is a spectacle entirely novel to the Indians' (8, 4, 381).

Thus, the most surprising, from Vivekananda's point of view, are not only the successes themselves of the British but

also the role which the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, the Vaisyas, started playing in the ensuring of these successes and, on the whole, in the social life of England, and later of India. But why did this circumstance seem so novel and unusual for India ? Why were, in this country,—in the course of its hundreds of years of development,—only two stages of social evolution, ‘the empire of Brahmins’ and the ‘empire of Ksatriyas’ regarded as ‘realized’, and why did the ‘empire of Vaisyas’ get ‘imported’ from outside, from beyond the ocean ? Why, on the other hand, in England herself and in other countries of the West, did this ‘empire of Vaisyas’ appear as a result of internal development ? In trying to find an answer to these questions, Vivekananda formulates his conception of principal differences between Indian and West European civilizations. A most extensive list of such differences is available in his article *Problem of Modern India and its Solution* (1899), where he states that the present-day Europe and America are the ‘glory and pride of their ancestors’, the *Yavanas* (this is how the Greeks were called in ancient India). The West European civilization, coming on the footsteps of the Greek, is, from Vivekananda’s viewpoint, different from the Indian in the following ways: the former values strength the most, the latter—spiritual sublimity; cultivated in the former is the gratification of desires, in the latter—self-renunciation; the former stresses the importance of the study of the outer world, the latter—of the inner; the ideal of the former is political freedom, of the second—spiritual; the most important in the former are earthly joys, in the latter—eternal bliss (see *ibid.*, 335). This enumeration of differences continues in other works of Vivekananda. Stressed, in particular, are the sense of tolerance in the domain of religions and other convictions characteristic of India as contrasted to the West (see 8, 1, 390); the absence in this country of grabbing tendencies directed to the areas of the earth beyond the Hindustan peninsula (8, 3, 106); the absence of egocentric accents on one’s own virtues and respect for traditions of Indian leaders of culture

(see *ibid.*, 274-75) etc. The generalized formulations of differences between India and the West most frequently found in Vivekananda are as follows: (a) If the West has demonstrated how much it can 'blow up' man's needs, India has shown how much these can be restricted and done away with (see *ibid.*, 181); (b) if the West has displayed possibilities of human control over outer nature, India has shown the possibilities of control over 'inner' nature (see 8, 1, 133); (c) if the Western civilization is mainly oriented towards natural sciences and is 'materialistic', the Indian is 'spiritualistic' and oriented mainly towards religion (see 8, 3, 156-57).

It is just on the strength of these differences, according to Vivekananda, that an 'empire of Vaisyas' has become possible in the West—a bourgeois society with characteristic development of technology ('control over outer nature'), with 'artificial' multiplication of requirements, prevalence of egoism and egocentrism (supposedly as a result of the loss of religious, 'spiritual' values).

What can be said about these thoughts of Vivekananda on the comparison of the 'main tendencies' of two civilizations? First, these constantly reveal the tendency to show the initial superiority of Indian civilization—a tendency natural enough in conditions of sharp polemics with Europocentrist furies and apologies of colonialism, but at times leading to 'Asiacentrism' (and more correctly, 'Indocentrism'). We already had the occasion of being convinced of how often Vivekananda stresses the principle of antiquity of various types of culture in India (be it religious, philosophical or even scientific) compared with Europe. But this is not enough: Indian culture, from his point of view, differs from the European by a special kind of 'sublimity', 'spirituality' and depth. Secondly, while making these comparisons, Vivekananda frequently transfers the features of specific stages of development of civilizations analysed by him to their entire history on the whole (it is, we shall say, obvious that the European culture was by no means always secular and oriented towards natural sciences). Thirdly,

Vivekananda leaves obscured in shadow the fight amongst various tendencies in European and Indian culture. Actually, strong materialistic and atheistic traditions existed in supposedly 'spiritualistic' culture of India.\*

All this leaves its mark on the outcome of Vivekananda's thinking—it is difficult to accept the outcome, though, in the course of the thinking itself, he at times formulates a number of fairly convincing positions relative to the characteristics of Indian civilization (and, in particular, culture). Such, for example, are the positions of relatively greater (than in European countries) tolerance of faith in ancient India, of the special role of centuries-old traditions in this country, of the development and significance (in its philosophy and culture on the whole) of introspective psychology.

But even when Vivekananda is able to 'fix' some characteristic of Indian culture, he essentially is not in a position to explain it. The actual correlation between the ideas and the social existence giving rise to them is, in Vivekananda, turned upside down: the social order supposedly proceeds from tendencies and characteristics of development of culture and not the other way round. But then it does not become clear why the *Yavanas* who, according to Vivekananda, were so much influenced by Indian philosophical, religious (etc.) ideas, followed principally a different path. . . .\*\*

Whatever the case, both the paths—the Indian as well as the West European—states Vivekananda (despite all his sympathy for the former),—historically led to numerous unforeseen and undesired consequences. In his work *The East and*

\*This is convincingly shown in the works of N. P. Anikeev (15) and D. Chattopadhyaya (41). Here, however, we shall observe that Vivekananda's thesis on 'spiritualism' of Indian culture was not only theoretically untenable but could serve (and served) as the basis for conclusions of extremely conservative type. This is at times made use of by some of the modern opponents of secularization of Indian social and cultural life.

\*\*Vivekananda, it is true, tried to find an escape from this difficulty by means of references to differences in geographical conditions of Europe and India (see 8, 3, 270). But the thesis that culture is 'conditioned by geographical environment' is very weak (a semblance of 'convincingness' may be had only by ignoring the presence of contradictory tendencies in each culture, as also its 'instability' as distinct from relatively stable geographical environment.

*The West* (in its theme, directly allied to the *Modern India*), he arranges a 'rendezvous' of its own kind of modern representatives of the two civilizations, making it possible to discern, particularly in outline (though, because of strong passions on both the sides, in exaggerated, almost caricature form) their shortcomings. This is the result of the 'clash' of the European with the modern Indian reality: 'Devastation by violent plague and cholera; malaria eating into the very vitals of the nation; starvation and semi-starvation as second nature; death-like famine often dancing its tragic dance; the Kurukshetra (battle-field) of malady and misery, the huge cremation ground, strewn with the dead bones of lost hope, activity, joy, and courage; and in the midst of that, sitting in august silence, the Yogi, absorbed in deep communion with the Spirit, with no other goal in life than *Moksa*: This is what meets the eye of the European traveller in India' (8, 5, 344-45).

And here is the view of the other side: 'Maddened with the wine of newly acquired powers; devoid of discrimination between right and wrong; fierce like wild beasts, henpecked, lustful; drenched in liquor, having no idea of chastity or purity, nor of cleanly ways and habits; believing in matter only... addicted to the aggrandisement of self by exploiting others' countries, others' wealth... whose whole life is only in the senses and creature comforts: Thus, to the Indian, the Westerner is the veriest demon (*Asura*)' (*ibid.*, 345-46).

Of course, Vivekananda considers these two views one-sided, not seeing the 'positive' sides of both the civilizations, but also not without grounds. And, first of all, he accepts that the India of his time is a dismal picture of mass poverty, disease, hunger, ignorance and lawlessness. It is true, Vivekananda affirms, the European colonial powers are in a considerable measure responsible for this: India, the leading 'land of wonders and treasures', became a source of enrichment and object of plunder for Spain, Portugal, France, England (see 8, 7, 340). In his attitude to colonial powers Vivekananda has no illusions whatsoever; all their 'civilizing activity', in his words, is dicta-

ted only by the interest in the purse of others (see 8, 8, 69). However, the very success of the colonizers, having conquered a vast country in a comparatively short period and making it bow before the 'factory pipe as military banner' (8, 4, 385), was, according to Vivekananda, also due to the process of emaciation of the masses in India and their stagnation, due to the 'mummifying' of Indian civilization which had been going on for a long time before colonization (see 8, 5, 5). What caused this stagnation, this 'mummifying'? Replying to this question, Vivekananda suggests two main reasons. On the one hand he speaks of the 'onesidedness' of the Indian civilization formed historically in the course of many centuries of development: the balance, the correct correlation between the inner and the outer, the spiritual and the material, meditation and activity, were destroyed. In his view, the founders of the Indian civilization tried to establish this balance, and this found its expression, for instance, in the teaching about four aims of life (*kama*—love, *artha*—profit, *dharma*—law, *moksha*—liberation) and four stages of life (*ashramas*), passing through which a man systematically acts the roles of the pupil, householder, dweller of the forest, removed from worldly affairs, and sannyasi: it was supposed that it was not possible to go over from the 'lower' aims and 'lower' *ashramas* to the higher, by 'jumping' the steps of the ladder leading to them. But if this kind of harmony was preached in the 'Bible of Hinduism', the *Bhagavadgita*, it was, later on, sharply violated with Buddhism playing a special role therein. 'The Buddha ruined us',—Vivekananda regretfully writes,—'in the same way as Christ ruined Greece and Rome' (*ibid.*, 357). And here he also notes such an impassioned fact: the irony of history lies in that though the 'Bible of Hinduism' defends, in Krishna's words, the need for force, and the Christian Gospel, in the words of Christ, the need for non-violence, the progress of European and Indian civilization embodied something opposite to the counsels of 'their' deities. ... This interesting antithesis essentially leads Vivekananda to believe that not ideas, but social existence, determined the con-

duct of the people. True, constrained by the stated 'paradox', he himself does not draw such a conclusion. . . .

In any case, speaking of the second reason for the 'mummification' of Indian civilization, Vivekananda touches upon quite real social roots of this phenomenon (though he does it by taking recourse to not quite adequate formulations). This second reason, from his point of view, is the avidity of the members of the higher castes, corrupting the initial 'idea' of the system of *varnas* underlying *dharma*. . . . Of course, even here, Vivekananda puts forth his idealized notions about the ancient Indian reality; but about the reality of his time, he, in this case, speaks quite realistically. Vivekananda firmly condemns the caste system in the form in which it entered the modern Indian society: 'The present caste differences are obstacles on the path of progress in India. These constrain, lead to narrowness, divide. These become shaky in the face of the new ideas. . . .' (89, 371). Quite in the spirit of Dayananda Saraswati, Vivekananda condemns such features of caste system as (1) hereditary character of castes, (2) their closedness, (3) the position of members of lower castes derogatory to human dignity, and lastly (4) the privileged position of members of castes considered higher (see *ibid.*, 370). But he is more radical than his predecessor. While Dayananda is mainly against closedness and hereditary character of castes, and, in the context of assertion of universal rights for education, only partly touches upon the privileges of members of higher castes, Vivekananda makes these privileges one of the foremost objects of his criticism. He calls the idea of privileges a 'curse' of mankind, and stresses that the differences in people must be the ground for differences in their responsibilities, for their 'contribution' to the general task, but by no means for personal profit and advantage (see 8, 1, 422 and 434). The privileges of the priestly class of Brahmins are specially censured by Vivekananda. In one of his letters he says to his disciples: 'Become human beings, at last ! Drive away the priests who are always against progress. . . . They are the offsprings of



centuries-old dominance of superstitions and tyrannies' (8, 5, 8). Vivekananda's loquacious words became some of the most popular slogans of the radically minded Indian youth of early twentieth century: 'No priests, no social tyranny !' (quoted from 52, X)

Thus, to restore the vitality of the nation, it is, according to Vivekananda, necessary to denounce caste privileges, to smash the fetters of caste system which keep the country bound hand and foot, to cleanse the country at the same time of the layers of idealized system of *varnas*. But this is not enough. India must not be like an 'oyster shut up in its shell' (8, 3, 317); she must take note of the positive sides of development of the Western civilization.

Generally speaking, according to Vivekananda, both the civilizations have to take something from each other: 'Just as the too active Western mind would profit by an admixture of Eastern introspection and the meditative habit, so the Eastern would benefit by a somewhat greater activity and energy' (8, 1, 382). In this context Vivekananda also reiterates such a (based on the thesis, already known to us and not subjected to criticism, about agreement in principles of modern science and Vedanta) formula: 'For the marvels of the region of spirit (East !) we will exchange the marvels of the region of matter (West !)' (8, 3, 317-18). But Vivekananda is most disturbed by the destiny of India, and accordingly we find in him an extensive exposition of what must be 'learnt' by Indian civilization from the West European. It is interesting that Vivekananda is attracted by such characteristic of bourgeois society that profitably distinguishes it from the feudal, and this, above all, is technological progress. 'India must learn from Europe how to triumph over external nature',—he writes (8, 5, 146). He also has a high opinion of such 'signs' of Europe of his time as the development of science and education (see 8, 3, 157). From his point of view, the struggle of the European nations for sovereignty, political freedom and independence is worthy of emulation (see 8, 4, 360). And lastly, he is impressed

by that reappraisal of outlived traditions, customs, ideas which has in the new times been going on in Europe (see *ibid.*, 337).

Despite all this, speaking of the future of India, Vivekananda stresses that she must avoid both 'Scylla of old orthodoxy' and the 'Charybdis of modern European civilization' (8, 3, 151). Behind the brilliant facade of this civilization he sees something unexpected and dismal: 'The social life in the West is like the peels of laughter, deadening the cry coming out of the depths of the soul. The laughter turns into sobbing. The entertainments and joys are on the surface, deep inside is hidden something tense and tragic' (89, 151). In accordance with his overall scheme, Vivekananda sees the reasons of this mainly in the 'onesidedness' of Western civilization leading, in his view, to the loss of control over self in the pursuit of control over nature, to the oblivion of the spiritual in pursuit of the physical, to the loss of inner 'depth' as a result of the tendency to grasp most widely external things etc. On the other hand, he talks of the corrupting influence on the whole social life of the countries of the West, of the 'privilege of wealth' and of the social group (Vaishya *varna*) enjoying this privilege. It is just here that he is able to come closer to the understanding of real social sources of insecurity mentioned by him. The souls of the people, he believes, are emptied by continuous 'competitive struggle and 'cult of dollar' (8, 3, 182 and 114). This cult leaves, in his view, an indelible mark not only on the economic life of the countries of the West but also on their foreign and domestic policy, on philosophy, art, science and even religion. Dozens of pages in the works of Vivekananda are devoted to the criticism of the 'cult of dollar' and 'commercial civilization'. We shall cite here only one most significant passage: 'The wealth and power of a country are in the hands of a few men who do not work but manipulate the work of millions of human beings. By this power they can deluge the whole earth with blood. Religion and all things are under their feet; they rule and stand supreme.

The Western world is governed by a handful of Shylocks. All those things that you hear about—constitutional government, freedom, liberty, and parliaments—are but jokes' (*ibid.*, 158).

This lucid exposure of the bourgeois society is directly related to utopian-socialistic tendency in the philosophy of Vivekananda. The point is that the synthesis of the positive sides of Indian and European civilizations desired by him, cannot, in his deep conviction, be achieved either by the classes ruling in India who are 'morally and physically dead' (18, 195), or by the top hierarchy of the West European society despisngly called by him a 'pack of wolves' (see 43, 26). Vivekananda pins all hopes for better future of India and of mankind on the working masses, on the 'lowest' Shudra *varna*, who are in the most impoverished, hard position but are nevertheless called upon to play a more prominent role in history.

According to Vivekananda, the historical process is, in the modern period, reaching a certain complex turning point. So far the ship of history was invariably controlled by captains from the higher privileged classes, but the 'staff' was invariably from amongst the common people. It was by depending upon the support of these people, passing on, with sufficient or little grounds, their interests for the universal, that the social groups possessing the privileges of 'knowledge, power of wealth' came to power (see 8, 1, 422). But the 'duty of every aristocracy is to dig its own grave, and the sooner it does so, the better' (8, 3, 297). The aristocracy of wealth is also no exception. The signs of its impending fall were seen by Vivekananda already in the late nineties. In his words 'so long they (the working people) worked like silent machines, guided by the reason of man, and the intelligent, educated part of society took away a substantial part of the fruits of their labour. Such is the position in all countries. But the times have changed. The lower classes are gradually realizing this and creating an united front, are full of resolve to obtain what is theirs by

right. The masses of Europe and America have awakened first and have already started the struggle. The signs of this awakening have also appeared in India, which is testified by the number of strikes by the lower classes in our days. The higher classes cannot any more subjugate the lower, howsomuch they may try' (quoted from 23, 65-6).

But the fall of the 'aristocracy of wealth' is also simultaneously a fall of all aristocracy in general. For the first time the representatives of the 'common people' have been called upon to control the society.

In 1899, in his article *Modern India* already mentioned (by us) above, Vivekananda writes: 'A time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class. . . a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their inborn Sudra nature and habits—not becoming in essence Vaisya or Ksatriya, but remaining as Sudras—will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to break slowly upon the Western world, and the thoughtful are at their wits' end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon. Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism, and other like sects are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow' (8, 4, 401-2).

It is interesting that back in the summer of 1893, at the time of his stay in the house of the Wrights, Vivekananda as per testimony of M. L. Burke, for the first time makes his famous, his later oft-repeated prophesy that the dawn of the new era will come in Russia (see 47, 26). He himself welcomes this new era. 'I am a socialist', he declares,—'although I do not consider socialism a perfect system. But half the bottle is better than nothing' (89, 501). The statements that he makes in the context of his acceptance of socialism are related first of all with the theory of synthesis of civilizations of the West and the East already known to us—the socialistic teaching, we know, originated in the West (and is hence not free from a certain onesidedness).

Generally speaking, Vivekananda never expounded some-

what extensively his views on the nature of socialist society; but we nonetheless draw certain conclusions about his understanding of this society proceeding at least from the already mentioned letter to Mary Hale. Of course, he is far from scientific socialism; his socialism on the whole has a petty bourgeois romantic, utopian character. First, the Shudra *varna* in Vivekananda is not at all the proletariat but the 'oppressed', or the 'unprovided' ones, in general; in the conditions of India the reference was largely to peasants and partly to craftsmen. Secondly, the victory of the Shudra *varna* means not a radical change in the class structure of society but preservation of the very same 'eternal' four *varnas*, but without the privileges earlier inherent in them, and without the exploitation of one *varna* by the other. Thirdly, the victory of the Shudra *varna*, according to Vivekananda, must lead not to liquidation of personal property, but only to 'redistribution of bread and pleasures' so that 'everyone has his share' of material favours (quoted from 40, 51). Fourthly, accepting in principle as we have seen above, the admissibility of force in a just struggle, Vivekananda nonetheless considers possible and desirable (particularly in the conditions of India) non-violent evolutionary transition to socialism (see 43, 75). By means of the same very 'Eastern spirituality' he wanted, on the one hand, to 'recultivate' the higher classes of society, making them accept the 'legitimate rights' of the lower (see 8, 7, 147), and on the other, to 'raise' the masses, injecting into them the confidence in their own powers and awakening in them the dormant sense of their own dignity (see 8, 3, 192). Besides, the 'Eastern spirituality' on the whole, and religion in particular, are, according to Vivekananda, called upon to play an extremely significant role not only in the process of transition to the 'empire of Shudras' but also in further destinies of this 'empire'. On the one hand, he fears the possible 'lowering down' of the level of culture under the dominance of Shudras (see 8, 6, 342-43) and strives to avert it, and religion, from his point of view, is the 'nucleus' of the Eastern culture. On the other hand,

as we have already seen, the ultimate goal of mankind, in Vivekananda's view, is the creation of a 'society of jivan-muktas' ("of which the 'empire of Shudras' proper is the prologue"). But such a society without Hinduism and Vedanta is unthinkable. No wonder then that Vivekananda stresses the need for 'raising the masses, but without detriment to religion' (8, 5, 25).

Of course, these notions (and many of them were borrowed by the Indian thinkers of the twentieth century from Aurobindo Ghosh to Gandhi) are principally unfounded. The socialist society cannot emerge without a radical change in class structure and property relations. This kind of change is impossible without a struggle. Such a spiritual offspring of the old world as religion is also not above this struggle but within its sphere. In general, there is in this struggle no 'arbiter', 'impassioned' and outside the struggling sides. . . . .

All this is so. And Vivekananda's services as one of the first to express his support for non-capitalist development of India are nonetheless indisputable. A major role in the history of the Indian social thought of the new times was played by his ideas of the need of radically-democratic transformations (including the liquidation of caste barriers, inequality of men and women, inequality in the sphere of national relations etc.) of the people as a force called upon to put into practice these changes, and lastly, of the merger in one stream of national-liberation struggle and struggle against exploitation and oppression.

In conclusion we shall note one more important circumstance\*: Vivekananda sees the connection of the movements for socialism and liberation of colonies with the movement for peace. For him, we know, the greedy interests of the same very ruling 'Vaishyas' against whom both the earliest movements were directed, are the source of war. It is characteristic that he regards India's adherence to the idea of peace (see 8, 3, 106)

\*This is taken note of by N. P. Anikeov in his article on Vivekananda, devoted to his birth centenary (16, 107).

## PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHING OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

as one of the foundations of the grandeur of India in the past (see 8, 3, 106) and foresees that she is destined to play an important role in the establishment of peace on the planet.

Through the haze of romantic illusions and utopian desires Vivekananda was nonetheless able to discern the contours of the future with adequate clarity—and, at times, even simply with striking precision.

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# BOURGEOIS REFORMATION OF HINDUISM

R. B. RYBAKOV

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE Marxist science contrasts the theological concept of religion as invariable and immanent to a critical analysis of the history of religion as a part of the history of human society. The dependence of the evolution of its forms, dogmas and notions on the shifts in social and economic relations is revealed here. It is common knowledge that, because of conservatism of religious consciousness and relative independence of religious ideology, such a dependence is not rectilinear. Besides, the evolution itself of such notions is limited to the 'baggage' of religion proper, is constrained to the confines of traditional notions and categories, but receives a different interpretation at every new stage of social development.

The study of the history of religion presupposes an analysis of various forms or stages of the religious world outlook (from genetic-tribal beliefs to ecumenic religions) and of definite global processes, touching in some measure or the other all religions both at various historical stages (say, division into philosophy, law, ethics) as well as simultaneously as in the present world crisis of religious outlook caused by the spread of scientific knowledge. It pre-supposes besides, a re-examination of the concrete processes of origin, establishment, and development of each of the religious systems—not only in areal, but also in local and even national manifestations (for example, Buddhism in general, and the Ceylonese or Japanese Buddhism in particular).

## CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS NOTIONS

At the junction of local and global problems are problems associated with changes in religious notions during the shift of socio-economic formations. K. Marx and F. Engels wrote

that 'with every great historical turn in social structures there also takes place a turn in the views and notions of people, which means, also in their religious notions'.<sup>1</sup> The righteousness of such a turn is of a universal nature, but it is expressed in its own way in every religion. Along with the differences on the confessional level, the role of specific concrete conditions is not small in this process.

The classical works of F. Engels, devoted to Reformation and to the emergence of Protestant heresy to counter feudal Catholicism are a model of analysis and general laws of a turn in the religious notions and of the characteristics of their refraction in a specific historical environment. These works give scholars a methodological base for studying similar processes in other religions or in other conditions. Besides an explosion of its kind of old religious notions, the changes in these may take place gradually, by evolutionary method, or may be formulated at a comparatively later stage, already after the formation of new production relations—the revival. As a rule, the latter is noted in the stagewise stagnant form of religion, not having passed in its time through the 'explosion' type reformation.

However, in conditions of stagewise conformity, the reformation does by no means have an 'explosive' character always and everywhere. When, in the background of the dominance of orthodoxy, there is observed a consolidation of non-Canon sects and a strengthening of anti-feudal, essentially bourgeois ferment in them, the individual forms of sectarianism are allowed to be called 'in some way subjugated by reformation'. Here the usually small groups of like-minded persons turn out to be the new religious representatives; their movement does not lead to the appearance of typological symbols of the new Church.

A typical variant of bourgeois reformation of religion is noted in the countries of the East. Taking place here are complex processes related, in particular, with the retention in economic and social spheres, of traditional institutions, and

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also with the vast influence of religion on social life and social consciousness. The religious outlook in these countries covers simultaneously a few evolutionary stages. A part of these is allied also with pre-capitalist traditional notions, and a part emerged, however, comparatively recently as a result of bourgeois reformation.

### LAWS OF REFORMATION IN INDIA

This paper makes an attempt to survey the characteristics and laws of reformation in India, more correctly in her most wide-spread religion, that is, Hinduism. Such an attempt is being made practically for the first time.<sup>2</sup> True, a great number of writings have been published in India, England and USA, concerning the individual leaders of reformation but there are no generalizing materials on this topic. The question of reformation as a process was not posed in foreign studies, except in the old (written in 1914) book of D. Farquhar,<sup>3</sup> assigning, not rightly, an exceptionally great role to Christianity in the then British colony. The Soviet historians A. M. D'yakov, I. M. Reisner, E. N. Komarov, L. R. Polonskaya, V. S. Kostyuchenko, A. D. Litman etc. have approached, from Marxist positions, the problem of correlation of enlightenment and reformation; have appraised in detail the egalitarian and secularist tendencies, and ethical and social aspects of the teachings of Rammohun Roy, Swami Vivekananda, B. G. Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, M. K. Gandhi, and also the problem of Muslim reformation, though here the questions of reformation of Hinduism have not been specially analysed.

The study of these questions, it is thought, is nevertheless extremely important. It is important first of all on the historical level so that, as already stated, one can correctly understand the complex phenomena that occurred in the not too distant past and have not lost their significance even in the present day (say, the development of secularism on the one hand, and communalism on the other; the specific nature of Indian national liberation movement on the whole and the Gandhian

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ideology in particular). It is important also at the level of religious studies so that one can follow the evolution of modern Hinduism and find out the mechanism and laws of modernization and modification of this religion.

Besides, it is important at the political level too—to understand the trends and objectives of various political parties in India, many of which use a phraseology characteristic of the early reformers, to identify the progressive or reactionary elements camouflaged in such phraseology, and to appraise and prognosticate correctly the development of these elements.

Together with this, the question of reform of Hinduism and of religion in general in the countries of the East remains to some extent controversial—not so much because one denies the presence here of phenomena of this kind but because of the use of the word ‘reformation’ as a turning point, and owing to the usually direct associations revealed with the Reformation of Catholicism. Although the well-known analogies between Reformation in Europe and reformism in India are admissible and even well founded, it is not on the whole right to impose the specific nature of one phenomenon on another, similar one, but taking place in different conditions.

It seems, L. S. Vasil’ev and D. E. Furman are right in their main thought when they write: ‘In our view, it is necessary to differentiate clearly between Reformation with a capital letter—a special, historically unique phenomenon in European history, related to the growth of the bourgeoisie and helping in its further consolidation, and reformation with a small letter,—reformation, as a legitimate mechanism in the functioning of any religious system of ‘incoming’ movement to the original source, as legitimate also as the movement from the first source’.<sup>4</sup> This point of view is shared by V. I. Pavlov.<sup>5</sup> It should simply be noted that the reverse movement to the original teaching does not still permit itself to speak of reformation.

In our work the terms ‘reformation’ and ‘reformism’ are used for denoting the process of conscious change in the con-

ceptual positions of religion, its function or role in the period of origin and establishment of bourgeois relations. A detailed analysis of this process is undertaken below. Here, however, it is necessary to enumerate briefly the most important factors determining the characteristics of the course of reformation of Hinduism compared with the European Reformation.

First of all, the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, when this reformation took place, are a comparatively new historical periods, compared to the sixteenth century in Europe. The reformist activity of Rammohun Roy falls in the years, almost directly following the period of Enlightenment in the West. The Christianity introduced into India had been suffering reverses and changes already for a long time, caused by the establishment of new production relations; moreover, capitalism itself had entered the period of crisis. The concluding stage of Hindu reformation unfolds itself when there is observed a stupendous development of scientific knowledge and respectively, an unprecedented change in religious outlook and also a transition from the stage of confessional juxtapositions to the dialogical stage. Besides, while Reformation of Catholicism in the general historical process was, for its time, a qualitatively leading source of worldwide dimension, the reformation of Hinduism was in this sense only of a local significance.

Secondly, India of the nineteenth-twentieth centuries was far different from the Europe of the period of Reformation. The characteristics of the development of capitalism, formation of bourgeois ideology, and what is important, the colonial dependence of the country and the growth of national liberation movement conditioned the specific nature of reformation itself.

Thirdly, many of its peculiarities are related to confessional characteristics. The practical absence in Hinduism of a universally accepted canon, and of an organized clergy and church in their christian sense, provides opportunities for a greater selectivity, and consequently, for reducing the tension of an



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ideological situation, and, in the words of V. I. Pavlov, of the unnecessary of 'resolving it by means of an explosion of dominant ideology'.<sup>6</sup>

### REFORMIST IDEAS IN INDIA

The appearance of reformist ideas in India was quite natural and legitimate, it was caused by the historical shifts in the country on the boundary of eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. At the economic level these shifts meant a gradual breach of feudal relations and growth (true, very slow and one-sided) of capitalist mode. On the social level it was marked by the appearance of a narrow stratum of national bourgeois elements. This was, as noted by E. N. Komarov, 'the top hierarchy of traders, who, though in a subjugated position of compradors, started taking part in the world capitalist trade, and also a small group of intelligentsia of merchant-landlord origin, formed mainly from among the employees of colonial administration and British business houses'.<sup>7</sup> It must be said that the bourgeois elements were still extremely weak and fewer in number and most closely connected with feudal agriculture.

Lastly, at the ideological level, the shifts were expressed in the awakening of national consciousness and in gradual formation of bourgeois ideology, which originated and for some time developed exclusively in the bed of religious reformation. The medieval outlook was brought in harmony with the new concept of the world,—of the place of man in it, of the essence of faith, role of reason,—a concept reflecting 'a very early realization from the point of view of the then level of development of India' by bourgeois elements, by the forerunner of the class of national bourgeoisie that they were 'a new class of society'.<sup>8</sup>

A no less important circumstance was the change in the religious situation in the multi-confessional country, consisting in Islam losing its relatively privileged position, and also in the penetration of Christianity and definite influence of the

work of missionaries. This influence was not uniform. Christianity was perceived by the reformists of Hinduism as an ideology of the 'ruling caste', and their attitude to it practically coincided with the attitude to the colonial regime. Advancing forward, let us say that this attitude was both panegyric (Sen), and restrained (Roy), and even sharply negative (Dayananda Saraswati), that is, it was the projection of every reformist's own social-political views. Christianity was seen also in the light of confrontation of two different civilizations, having a long history and having developed their own ethical, philosophical and religious values over thousands of years. Such an approach was marked by a certain mutual penetration, and also more or less by serious attempts at mutual interpretation. It was perceived, lastly, as a dogma, preached by the missionaries, and was in this capacity totally unacceptable from the very beginning.

There were two aspects: the proselytism of the missionaries combined the praise of 'the word of Christ' with the criticism of Hinduism (as also of Islam and other 'heathen' dogmas). This criticism was made at times from the positions of Christianity which had already gone through Reformation;—and then it helped the fact that the earliest reformers were able to look at Hinduism from outside, as it were, 'with a fresh look',—and at times also from the positions of 'papal limitation and racist arrogance',<sup>9</sup> which made the Hinduist ideologists stand for the vindication of their injured national pride.

In this a definite role was played also by the spread of European education and English language. And this, among other things, led also to the fact that the achievements of advanced Western thought began to influence directly the minds of Indian intelligentsia. This, as also the reverse influence (illustrated by the publication of Rammohun Roy's works in America and countries of Europe during the author's own lifetime), showed that the ideological development of India had become a part of the world process with all the consequences resulting therefrom.

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The task set in the present study is to analyse the specific nature of early bourgeois reformism in completely historical conditions, and also to ascertain in it the general laws of the process of creation of 'bourgeois varieties' of religion.<sup>10</sup> It should be considered that the periodization of reformation, and such concepts as 'bourgeois complex', 'traditional complex' etc., suggested by the author, are a laboratory convention of its own kind. Such conventionalities are essential, though actually all aspects of the process have a still more veiled, hidden character and are made far more complex by various circumstances, than demonstrated in this study.

### APPRAISAL OF HINDU REFORMISM : RAMMOHUN ROY

It is important to stress here that reformation of Hinduism has been appraised here mainly 'from outside', that is, from the point of view of history of social thought in India in the new times and not in the background of detailed analysis of changes in the dogma of the religion itself.

The religious reformism is only one of the aspects of the multi-sided transformational activity of Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), rightly called the 'father of modern India'. Since a general characterization of his work has in its time been given in the works of Soviet historians E. V. Paevskaya<sup>12</sup> and E. N. Komarov,<sup>13</sup> we shall restrict ourselves here only to the appraisal of the aspect which is of immediate relevance to our theme.

The biography of Rammohun Roy is not sufficiently well-known—the more close it is to his early life, the less authentic the facts. From the documents and reminiscences preserved we know that he was born in the family of a noted Brahmin in West Bengal, had already in his childhood mastered the Persian language and then continued his studies in Patna, where he got to know Muslim philosophy, Persian poetry, and according to some sources, also the works of Aristotle. At the instance of his mother,—an orthodox woman, hoping to bring her son closer to Hinduism to neutralize the influence of his Muslim

education,—he goes to Varanasi (Benares), but the ‘holy city’ had an oppressing effect on the young boy. There he takes part in debates with local pundits, mastering polemical skill. His return home is accompanied by his clashes and disputes with his parents. The father complained: ‘Whatever argument I adduce, you have always your ‘*Kintu*’ [But], your counter-argument, your counter-conclusion, your counter-statement to oppose me’.<sup>14</sup> The disputes increased, and Rammohun left his paternal house, took to wandering about in the country, visited even Tibet, although in his later works we do not find any reference to his interest in Buddhism.

In 1803 Rammohun joined service with the British not long before what, in his words, aroused in him a ‘sense of great revulsion’.<sup>15</sup> For about ten years he worked as a senior clerk with tax collectors in various towns of West Bengal. His first published works came out around this time.

It was just during this period that Roy learnt English and also ancient Hebrew and Greek languages. This enabled him to get to know European science, philosophy, religious literature, in particular the works of Bentham and Bacon, and to read the works of early Christianity in original.

His autobiographical outline, published posthumously,<sup>16</sup> mentions works written by him in 1788-1790 and devoted to a criticism of Hinduism. Nevertheless, we feel, it is expedient here to start an appraisal of his religious-reformist views from a considerably much later period, the one comparatively better studied.

An analysis of his maturer works enables us to conclude that Rammohun stood perceptibly apart amongst his contemporaries by his encyclopaedic knowledge, knowledge of ancient and modern Oriental and European languages, his brilliant skill as a polemist and preacher; his all-round familiarity with Islam and Hinduism, and with Western philosophy and Christianity, also stood him in good stead. Undoubted is the influence on him also of such subjective and contradictory factors as his Brahmin origin and Muslim education, his

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wanderings in the country as an ascetic and his many years of service with the British.

One may discern three stages in the religious-reformation activity of R. Roy, which should be authentically considered to begin from the year 1815 when the first group of like-minded persons rallied around him.

The first stage, covering the period 1815-1818, is characterized by his written (translations of the Upanishads and commentaries on them) and oral (discussions on religious topics) expression against polytheism and idol worship in Hinduism,—actions which attracted attention, partly not-too-favourable, of a wide strata of Bengali society.

During the second stage (1818-1828) R. Roy's efforts are directed to the solving of more narrow and more concrete problems. He subjects to criticism individual customs and aspects of life of the Hindus, that is, practically unleashes a struggle for social change.

The third stage (1828-1833) is marked by the formation of a reformist society. This shows that differentiations of social views had already taken place: there was a clear gap between the followers of R. Roy and his opponents.

## PROPAGATION OF MONOTHEISM

The principal feature of the teaching of Rammohun was the idea of monotheism and, accordingly, the negation of Hindu polytheism. In the words of E. N. Komarov, the 'religious-philosophical concepts of Rammohun Roy present the first attempt in the history of India at creating bourgeois varieties of religion with its consistently-monotheistic idea of God'.<sup>17</sup> Roy keeps reverting to this theme in all that he writes; many of his works are specially devoted to it. His struggle against idol worship, his preferential attention to Vedanta, and many other aspects of his work, proceed directly from his non-acceptance of the grand pantheon of Hindu Gods.

Firmly rejecting the polytheistic beliefs of the Hindus and substituting them by 'chemically pure' monotheism, he sub-

jected thereby to cardinal reappraisal the very idea of God in Hinduism. God, in his interpretation, is not only one but is indescribable ('neither holy texts nor logical arguments could describe him'),<sup>18</sup> unknowable (the maximum that a person can know of God is that he exists), and devoid of any anthropomorphic features.

The unknowability of God does not, however, mean an individual's denial of inner religiosity, but the worship must be expressed not in the offering of 'flowers, leaves and viands', but in constant thoughts of the might of God, whose proof is the world created by him, and in never-ending feeling of deep gratitude for the fact that he created man and gave him the possibility of living in this world.

As noted by E. V. Paevskaya, the views of R. Roy are essentially deistic;<sup>19</sup> he admitted God's act of creating the universe and saw in him the preserver of the world. The destructive aspect, playing a no less important role in Hinduism, is completely absent in his teaching.

No less relentlessly does R. Roy oppose the worship of God under any name. Moreover, he included in the camp of his opponents those who worshipped an innumerable multitude of deities as well as those who worshipped the absolute in the image of Krishna, Kali or Siva, rejecting other Gods at the same time. In his religious philosophical system R. Roy leaves no place even for 'personal gods' (*Ista-devata*). Offering, sacrifices, pilgrimages, visits to 'holy places', the magic of words, (chanting of sacred *mantras*), and lastly, the worship of statues and images of gods and of animals associated with them are not given any significance. He suggests instead spiritual concentration, inner religiosity, and meditation.

'The idol worship practiced by our countrymen',—wrote R. Roy...—'is completely denied by the *shastras* and must be looked upon by a healthy mind with great horror,<sup>20</sup> as leading directly to amorality and ruinous to society. Every Hindu, praying so absurdly, creates a pair of idols, male and female, often unseemly, to represent thereby the gods he loves;

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from his years of childhood he is taught to study their history and ponder over them, as also over the histories of other gods, even if the deeds ascribed to them prove nothing, except licentiousness, sensuality, falsehood, ingratitude, travesty of trust and betrayal of friends'.<sup>21</sup>

Rammohun Roy says further that for an ordinary Hindu the image of God is not the personification of the idea enamoured; a majority of believers take the figures purchased in the bazar or made by their own hands as gods themselves, possessing all the divine attributes, with power to pardon or punish, to ignore the sins and to bless. These statues are endowed with human traits and desires. 'Striving to satisfy their pressing needs, he (the believer) feeds or poses that he feeds them every morning and evening, in heat does not forget to fan them and in the cold cares about their conveniences—for the day wraps them in a piece of warm cloth, in the night puts them to sleep in a cosy bed'. The believer goes to the extent of marrying off the god and the goddess and celebrates this event 'with no less pomp and show than the wedding of his own children'.<sup>22</sup>

In the view of R. Roy, idol worship was one of the reasons for the disintegration of Indians: 'modern Hindu idol worship, expressed in the observance of rules and writs concerning the mode of food and abstention,—rules which, according to the *Mahabharata* and other works, were never observed by their ancestors,—led the unfortunate Hindus to complete isolation from the rest of the world and from one another, to constant hardships and miseries'.<sup>23</sup>

One more circumstance should also be noted here: for Rammohun Roy polytheism and idol worship are not simply a delusion; to accept them and what is more, to defend them, is in his view a crime and not simply a mistake; it is not only desirable but necessary to reject these.

Thus, R. Roy was against a number of central conceptual positions of traditional Hinduism. The ideas of a single Impersonal God and of inner individual worship of him meant, in

the context of his teaching, the ideas of equality (of the believers before God) and national unity (elimination of sectarian contradictions) expressed in the religious form. One important characteristic of R. Roy's religious conception is denunciation of all rites and simplification of cult.

#### MOVE AGAINST 'SATI'

To supplement his expressions of protest against polytheism and idol worship, having great social resonance, Rammohun Roy takes up from 1818 a course of concrete, well-thoughtout action against individual aspects of religious practices. He makes it his mission to put an end to the most horrible of all Hindu customs—'sati'.

This rite of 'sati' goes back to the legend in the *Vayu-Purana*, where Siva's wife, Sati, to take revenge for the insult to her husband by her father, Daksa, burns herself. In the beginning the word 'sati' only meant a widow, continuing to remain unmarried after the death of her husband, and only gradually came to mean the widows of higher castes performing ritual suicide. Apparently, at some point of time, this custom was only a voluntary one. Its non-observance, though, made the woman an outcaste from society; under the threat of loss of caste, her own children disavowed her and she was deprived of her property. Ultimately, voluntariness was reduced only to the possibility of choosing between a tormenting but quick death on the fire and a slow dying by starvation. Later, the victims were deprived even of such a choice—'sati' became obligatory for widows of higher castes. Women were tied to the pyre and if they managed to free themselves, the crowd of fanatics pushed them back into the fire with bamboo sticks kept ready beforehand.

The inhumanity of this custom was so obvious that demands for its abolition had been made already by some preachers in the olden times, by whole sects of Hinduism (tantric), Buddhists and Jains, Mughal emperors (Akbar permitted the system of 'sati' only if it was strictly voluntary; Jahangir and Aurangzeb



categorically banned it. Only the British (excluding the missionaries) maintained neutrality, explaining their indifference by their regard for religious customs of the country. (Incidentally, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the practice of 'sati' did not at all remain what it was in the past: in the year 1803 alone, around Calcutta, there were registered 438 cases,<sup>24</sup> and between the year 1815 and 1820, that is, just when Rammohun Roy was carrying on active propaganda against this custom,—5,100 cases in Bengal, over 1,150 in Varanasi, over 700 in Patna etc.)<sup>25</sup>

It is true that in 1789, one of the Collectors, at his responsibility and risk, banned this 'sati' system and, wishing to have the official seal of approval, informed Governor-General Cornwallis about it. Soon he received a cold reply: The Government 'do not deem it advisable to authorize you to prevent the observance of it by coercive measures, or by any exertion of your official powers'.<sup>26</sup>

Almost a quarter of a century later, the colonial powers were obliged in any case to take the first step—they banned 'sati' in three cases: if the widow was pregnant, if she had a small child, or if she herself had not attained the age of 16. However, as the Indian investigator I. Singh, affirms, this half measure yielded nothing; hereafter at the time of the performance of the rite the police were positively present, and this created the impression of complete legality of the barbarian murder. Rammohun Roy had taken up cudgels in this regard already in 1811; it is possible that he had observed it even earlier but this time it happened in his own family; his sister-in-law lost her life in this way. The tragic incident left a great effect on him.

The choice of 'sati' system as an object of concrete criticism was determined, probably, by the following considerations: First, this custom had been admitted by all non-dogma Hindu thinkers as being extremely odious; secondly, in his fight against this system he could depend upon the support of some social groups both amongst the British (including missionaries;

not fearing that he would be accused of adherence to Christianity) as well as the Indians; thirdly, and what is most important, the struggle against the 'sati' system had a clearly social character. The struggle waged was not simply against old prejudices but for a change in the position of women in society; for reform not only of the religious but, in the first instance, of the social, and the related ways of life. Simultaneously, it touched also the purely ethical sphere: What was sanctioned by custom was immoral from the positions of humanism and healthy thinking. Lastly, the fight against 'sati' was the shifting of reformation from the field of theory to that of concrete work.

Rammohun Roy formulated his writings on this subject in the traditional form of dialogue between the protagonist of the custom and its opponent. As also in his fight against polytheism and idol worship, he had recourse to the Vedas, *Bhagavadgita*, Laws of Manu and, with the help of citations from them, boldly demonstrates to his opponents that 'sati' had never been obligatory. On the other hand, an ascetic life after the death of the husband was considered more preferable. He openly declared that murders are being committed under the mask of religion, and bitterly condemned the orthodox for tying the unfortunate women to the funeral pyre and perpetrating forced suicides.

In reply to this accusation, his opponents strove to put forward arguments in their support. Thus, one of the Brahmins, explaining why the widows are tied to the funeral pyre, declared profoundly that the body of a woman is tied with a rope already before the beginning of the customary ritual, not because she may change her mind but not to defile the funeral fire. With sarcasm Rammohun Roy objects: 'I ask what the woman is tied with—with an iron chain or a simple rope? The pandits are so attracted by the attempts to put up a pretence of a sense of justice by wrong actions that they try to make the people believe that the rope will remain untouched by the flames and will preserve the body from falling from

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the fire. A person of sound common sense can himself form an idea of how convincing these arguments are to justify the tying of widows'.<sup>27</sup>

It was thought that a great number of the Puranas had not come down to the new times. And R. Roy blames the orthodox themselves of composing the texts from these supposedly not extant Puranas to reinforce their justification and show the need for the custom of 'sati'; that is, thus indulge in direct forgery.<sup>28</sup>

In 1829, the active efforts of R. Roy and his associates against this barbarian custom were crowned with a definite success—the custom was officially abrogated.

## CRITICISM OF POLYGAMY

The polygamy practised by Hindus, which sometimes assumed great dimensions, also became the object of Rammohun's criticism. He cited cases where a Brahmin had ten, twelve, and even thirty wives.<sup>29</sup> In his struggle for women's personal rights, Rammohun expressed himself against such form of polygamy as *kulinism*, widespread in Bengal. The Brahmin from the *kulin* caste, considered very high (he himself, incidentally, belonged to it), often married up to one hundred times, some of them during one day.<sup>30</sup> R. Roy associates with *kulinism* the deterioration of morality and lack of education amongst the Bengalis.<sup>31</sup> His statements in this respect are an evidence not only of anti-Brahmin moods but also of his convictions about the illegitimacy of the 'right of birth': '...in that country where respect depends exclusively upon birth, knowledge and morals must inevitably come to ruin'.<sup>32</sup> On the whole, he had a negative attitude to Hindu marriage, seeing in it a masked sale of girls, a peculiar source of income to their relatives.<sup>33</sup>

Rammohun Roy's protests against customs sanctioned by a religion and forming an important part of tradition, were directed above all towards the objective of bringing out a social change. Hinduism, not having an organized church, depended,

on the one hand, on the institution of Brahmins and on the system of caste restrictions associated with it, and on the other—on the family as the basic (and the most conservative) embryo of society. The family in India (particularly patriarchal, including relatives from different lines, who manage the over-all economy<sup>34</sup>) is a peculiar micro-organism, and even till this day, it is marked by stagnancy and tradition. The domestic ritual here forms an extremely important element. All aspects of life of believers, right to the observance of personal hygiene, method of taking food, natural calls etc. are subject to religion. Any change in the teachings of Hinduism, in its philosophy, even in the customs of temples and festivals, will remain simply superfluous so long as these do not touch the traditional character of the family and penetrate deep into it.

The struggle for the improvement of a woman's position in the Indian society, and the statements against polygamy, against child marriages, and the custom of 'sati', were also essentially reduced to this, and had as their objective the gradual removal of the traditional bindings of the family, deviating from the established dogma and turning to relations based on the requirements of healthy thinking. It is relevant here to recall the observation of Fourier, sympathetically reiterated by F. Engels, that 'in every given society the extent of a woman's freedom is the natural measure of any liberation'.

#### HOPES ON EUROPEAN EDUCATION

Understanding well that any serious changes in the society can be expected only after a lapse of considerable time, Rammohun Roy pinned great hopes on European education. He repeatedly observed that stagnancy and adherence to the dogmas and customs of Hinduism were the result of childish impressions of earlier age and consequence of religious (Hindu) education. R. Roy considered the spread of education the most important condition of reformation while by education was implied not a study of ancient texts but a knowledge of the attainments of European scientific and philosophical thought.

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He fought for the study of natural disciplines. 'In his views on the role of education',—writes E. N. Komarov,—'Ram-mohun Roy stands out as a typical educationist.'<sup>35</sup> To the educational and enlightening features of his teachings should be assigned also the tendency to approach the precepts of Hinduism from a rationalistic position, laying stress on reason as the biggest criterion in the assessment of religious dogmas. There should also be noted here the definite anti-clericalism of R. Roy, his fight against the medieval morality, his non-acceptance of caste and position differences, his preaching of equality of all before God and non-acceptance of the 'right by birth'.

His teaching of systematic monotheism and his struggle against idol worship meant a rejection of the main dogmas of Hinduism, of its pantheon, sectarian differences and characteristics, rituals, both domestic and templar. The magic of action, the magic of word, pilgrimage,—all these were totally discarded. The demands for reform in the system of marriage relations, and for denouncing the customs of 'sati' and polygamy were an attack on very important aspects of the way of life of Hinduism. The caste system, and specially the institution of Brahminism, was also condemned by R. Roy. If one adds to this the criticism of a system of traditional religious upbringing, the resulting rejection of *guruism*, the strict non-acceptance of any images and even symbols as objects of worship as in the case of Muslims, the rejection of pantheistic and zoolatrous ideas, it will become clear that R. Roy's teaching was far removed from traditional Hinduism.

## POSITIVE ASPECT OF TEACHING

The positive aspect of this teaching has already been mentioned. In a thesis form it may be presented like this:

- (1) Man must believe in God.
- (2) God is one; He cannot be known, described, attained.
- (3) The world is real, and the man in it is a subject of

action. God, however, is the first cause of the world and its moral law.

- (4) Worship of God should be only by inner concentration and reflection.

The only thing that linked the deistic teaching of R. Roy with orthodox Hinduism was his acceptance of the authority of the sacred texts. Most surprising, at a first glance, is the steadfastness with which he refuses the title of a reformer, the consistency with which he shows that the doctrine preached by him is the real Hinduism, cleansed of later interpolations and corruptions. He wrote: 'Neither in my works, nor in my oral discussions, did I anywhere claim to re-examine or invent the doctrine of monotheism, never did I consider myself a reformer or a pioneer; far from such a self-expectation, I have in all my works so far published asserted that the doctrine of monotheism is true Hinduism and such in reality was this religion of our ancestors.'<sup>36</sup>

Can one regard R. Roy's views as a direct continuance and development of tradition ? How convincing are his references to the Vedas and the Upanishads as sources of his own views ? There is no denying the fact that individual elements of his teaching have their source in ancient Indian tradition. But, primarily, R. Roy stresses in it only one line of thought, discarding or ignoring the others; secondly, both the Vedas and the Upanishads on the whole give a totally different philosophical and religious picture of the world. It only remains either to accept Max Müller's view that Rammohun Roy 'had no idea of what the Veda really was',<sup>37</sup> or to admit that he consciously adapted tradition to his reformist views. For elucidating this question we shall turn to the translations of the Upanishads made by R. Roy.

#### TRANSLATION OF THE UPANISHADS

With these translations he aimed to show the existence of an ancient Indian monotheistic tradition. We shall here observe in passing that, from the point of view of the orthodox, the

publication itself of these translations bordered on blasphemy: the non-Brahmins did not have the right not only of reading these texts but even of touching them. In the preface to his English translation of the *Katha Upanishad* (1819), the author states that, thanks to the propagation of his translations 'as widely as opportunities permitted', many of his countrymen have accepted the correctness of his views.<sup>38</sup> The sphere of influence of these publications, apparently, gradually widened: many years after the death of R. Roy (in 1856) Debendranath Tagore met in Mathura a traveller who had studied Upanishads as retold by R. Roy, and had in his turn rendered these into Hindi.

Rammohun repeatedly refers to Vedanta in which he sees the highest attainment of Indian religious-philosophical thought. But on a careful analysis of his views it is found that he places a mark of equality between Vedanta and idealistic monism, not entering into theological subtleties which caused difference of opinion amongst the Vedantists of all times, including Sankara and Ramanuja. He does not concern himself with the differences amongst its schools; he ignores the question of the ways of attaining *Brahman*, of *maya*, of correlation of *Brahman* and *Atman*. He sees in this system an assertion of the abstract absolute spirit, and rejects such understanding of it where everything existent is considered a manifestation of God or as a 'part of the whole'. Rammohun thinks that, according to the Vedanta, everything existent is a manifestation of the will of God who here is something totally different from the senses of reality perceived by our organs. Moreover, fighting for reforms in education and showing preference for the development of natural sciences to the study of ancient Indian philosophical systems, he is not inclined to spare even Vedanta, and ridicules the usual themes of Vedantic judgements: 'How does the soul dissolve in the deity?' Or, 'What correlation do the soul and the divine essence have?'<sup>39</sup> '...Young persons do not become more useful members of the society with the help of Vedantic doctrines which teach them that all

the visible objects in reality do not exist and that in so far as the father, brother and others are not really existing, it is accordingly not necessary to have real attachment to them; the sooner we free ourselves from them and renounce the world, the better.<sup>40</sup>

It can be assumed that R. Roy's views were formulated (under the influence of Islam, and then also of European philosophical thought) before he turned to Vedanta, which served him as the only model for expressing his own views in a form acceptable to his countrymen. In other words, the Muslim education received by him in his childhood made him cultivate a certain 'immunity' to dogmas of Hinduism (is this not explained by his constant stress on the importance of not teaching children in the Hindu spirit, and on teaching them not to accept the traditional religious ideas?). Familiarity with European philosophy made him a deist and an enlightener, and it is just from these positions that he subjected to criticism the contemporary Hinduism. But at the same time he sought, and could not but seek, a support for his reformist views in the national tradition. And hence his addiction to the 'initial' teaching.<sup>41</sup>

That this was exactly so may be corroborated by an analysis of the translations of the four *Upanishads* (*Katha*—, *Isha*—, *Mundaka*—, and *Kena*—) made by Rammohun Roy into English. All the translations have his introductions in which he briefly sets forth his views. However, when these translations are compared with the originals, one discovers a curious tendentiousness. The translations made by R. Roy are simply not correct; they are consciously adapted to and brought in harmony with his views. He also partly takes quite a liberty with the original texts of the *Upanishads*, putting his own accents and intensifying their monotheistic trend.

He strives to give some summarizing and correcting significance to the texts, but this correction always follows the line of stress on the anti-ritual aspect (in this Rammohun mainly follows Sankara). Thus, in the translation of the



following place in the *Isha Upanishad* (*Isha*, 3)<sup>42</sup>:

Demoniac, verily, are those worlds enveloped in blinding darkness, and to them go after death those people who are the slayers of the self.<sup>43</sup>

the words 'those people who are the slayers of the self' have been rendered as 'those that neglect the contemplation of the Supreme Spirit,<sup>44</sup> either by devoting themselves solely to the performance of the ceremonies of religion, or by living destitute of religious ideas.'<sup>45</sup> In a passage from the *Kena Upanishad* (IV, 8) the words 'austerities, self-control and work'<sup>46</sup> have, been rendered by Roy following Sankara as 'selflessness, self-control and performance of religious rites'.<sup>47</sup>

In accordance with Sankara's commentaries<sup>48</sup> Roy treats the concept of '*avidya*' (ignorance, confusion, false knowledge) as the performance of rites<sup>49</sup> (*Isha*, 9). He departs very far from the text even while translating the earlier portion and the second section of the first part of the *Katha Upanishad*:

'Knowledge of God which leads to absorption, is one thing; and rites, which have fruition for their object, another: each of these producing different consequences, holds out to man inducements to follow it. The man, who of these two chooses knowledge, is blessed, and he who, *for the sake of reward*, practises rites, is excluded from the enjoyment of eternal beatitude; knowledge and rites both offer themselves to man; but he who is possessed of wisdom, taking their respective natures into serious consideration, distinguishes one from the other, and chooses faith, despising fruition; and a fool, for the sake of advantage and enjoyment, accepts the offer of rites.'<sup>50</sup>

We shall compare this place with the same passages as translated by S. Radhakrishnan:

1. (Yama said) : Different is the good, and different, indeed, is the pleasant. These two, with different purposes, bind a man. Of these two, it is well for

him who takes hold of the good; but he who chooses the pleasant, fails of his aim.

2. Both the good and the pleasant approach a man. The wise man, pondering over them, discriminates. The wise chooses the good in preference to the pleasant. The simple-minded, for the sake of worldly well-being, prefers the pleasant.<sup>51</sup>

It is seen from these examples that Rammohun simplifies and gives concrete definition to the language of the Upanishads (and this giving of concrete definition has a clearly tendentious character), somewhat hyperbolizing the anti-ritual trend of the works and, thus, making them a reliable ally in his struggle against idol worship.

In his prefaces to the translations of the Upanishads, R. Roy makes the reservation that any addition to the text, any change in it, any author's commentary thereon are printed in italics, but actually he does not observe this stipulation. The direct additions made by him are tendentious and their meaning is the same—intensification of anti-ritual aspect of the teaching of the Upanishads.

In the passage '... nothing which is obtained through perishable means can be expected to be eternal: hence what use of rites ?' (*Mund.* 1, 11, 12),<sup>52</sup> the words underlined by us are not there in the original, and in Rammohun those which are underlined have been stressed by being put in italics, and those stressed by us have not been stressed by him and must, in his view, look as belonging to the text.

The *Mundaka Upanishad* on the whole has been subjected to maximum recasting. Here is the translation of paragraph 10 from the first chapter of the second part:

The Supreme existence is himself all-rites as well as their rewards.<sup>53</sup>

In S. Radhakrishnan and other translators we read: 'The person himself is all this, work, austerity and Brahma...'<sup>54</sup>

S. Radhakrishnan translates another passage from the same chapter like this:

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5. From him (proceeds) fire whose fuel is the sun, (nourished by them) the male fire pours seed in the female, thus are creatures produced from the person.<sup>55</sup>

Swami Gambhirananda offers :

5. From him emerges the fire (that is, heaven) of which the fuel is the sun. From the moon emerges cloud, and (from cloud) the herbs and corns on the earth. A man sheds the semen into a woman. From Purusha have originated many creatures.<sup>56</sup>

The translation made by the well-known scholar of Hinduism, D. S. Sarma, almost agrees literally:

5. From Him comes the fire whose fuel is the sun; from the moon comes rain; and from the earth herbs; and man scatters seed in woman. Thus many beings are begotten from the Purusha.<sup>57</sup>

In Rammohun this passage sounds somewhat differently:

5. By him the sky, which is illuminated by the sun, is *produced*; clouds, which have their origin from the effects of the moon, *accumulating them in the sky*, bring forth vegetables in the earth; man imparts the essence *drawn from these vegetables*, to woman; *then through the combination of such physical causes*, numerous offspring come forth from the omnipresent Supreme Being.<sup>58</sup>

R. Roy's attempt to give a scientific looking form and even materialistic slant to obscure judgements in the Upanishads is in itself of interest here.

On the last verse of the *Isha Upanishad*, one of the most esteemed by the Hindus, namely on the verse which contains invocation of a dying person to the Sun god and to Fire god, Rammohun has made an interesting comment: 'This example from the Vedas, of the unhappy agitation and wavering of an idolator on the approach of death, ought to make men reflect seriously on the miserable consequence of fixing their mind on any other object of adoration but the one Supreme Being.'

R. Roy not only interpolated individual sentences into the texts translated by him, seriously altering the meaning of passages, but also sometimes omitted those which conflicted with his ideas. In the same first chapter of the second part of the *Mundaka Upanishad*, he omits the words—‘from Purusha come “all gifts to priests” or “sacrifices to Brahmins”,’—and translates the last part of the Upanishad incorrectly: in place of ‘Let none who has not performed the rite read this’<sup>59</sup> he gives: ‘...a person not accustomed to devotion should not study [it]’.<sup>60</sup>

And the last point. A greater part on the whole of what Roy did in respect of the four Upanishads was not translation but only expounding in some measure or the other close to the text, and not always even to the text of the Upanishad itself, as, for example, in the case of *Katha* where the theme reproduced from the *Taittiriya Brahmana* (found also in the *Rigveda*) has been set forth in lesser detail. It would have been more correct to consider Rammohun’s publications as renderings if he himself had not called them translations and did not insist so obstinately that, thanks to them, he was restoring the original ancient religion.

All this is evidence in support of a suggestion that the formation of the views of R. Roy was preceded by his effort at translating them although he might have had acquaintance with the Upanishads much earlier in his youth at the time of his first visit to Benares. The translation had to impart to Rammohun’s conception the authority of tradition, had to throw light on it, turning R. Roy from a heretic (as he undoubtedly appeared to many orthodox people), having read the Muslim and Christian books and tried under their influence to distort Hinduism, into a zealot of the purity of the faith of the ancestors, restoring the ancient teaching.

#### CRITICISM FROM WITHIN

The fact that he tried his best not to disrupt the thread, although only outwardly linking his ‘chemically pure’ deism

with the conglomeration of Hindu faiths, is corroborated by numerous examples. In this, his actions sometimes contradicted the spirit of his teaching. Thus, having constructed a house in a village where he shifted in 1817 after the hostilities in Calcutta against him, R. Roy had a yard made in front of his house for religious ceremonies, which in itself was not in conformity with his views, and had the sacred word '*om*' drawn on the bricks of this yard. Soon after, his relatives filed a court case against him—formally, arising out of division of property. Actually, the petitioners were dying to prove that Rammohun had ceased to be a Hindu and, as a punishment for this, to deprive him of his caste and then of his share in the inheritance. The court case cost him a great deal of money, and he spent it probably not only for the sake of this share but also for receiving the official seal of approval of his affiliation to Hinduism.

A British traveller, who had met Rammohun, later wrote: 'He professes to have no objection to eat and live as we do, but refrains from it in order not to expose himself to the imputation of having changed his religion for the good things of the world.'<sup>61</sup> He many times deferred his trip to England, and when he finally decided to go, took with him on the ship two Brahmin cooks so as not to defile himself by taking food prepared by Europeans. This was, of course, done solely for pacifying his orthodox countrymen. Properly speaking, such a position of R. Roy was not because of any fear of complications personally for himself; he was rather worried over the destiny of his teaching. In other words, in his attempt to hide or at least not to overstress the anticaste trend of his teaching, not to give the orthodox people a formal ground to deprive him of the caste and thereby ex-communicate him from the Hindu society, Rammohun was guided only by the fear that along with him his teaching too would be thrown away from Hinduism, and the criticism from within would become a criticism from outside, which would considerably alter the character of his reformation work.

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But the main thing was that, with all the historically conditioned illusions of R. Roy in respect of the mission of the British, his admiration of bourgeois structures in the metropolis, his faith in the historical mission of England in India, he could not but feel the need for a national unification of Indians in the name of progress. The politics of spiritual enslavement and oppression, the racist high-handedness of the Europeans, and the shameless methods of the missionaries, naturally evoked a feeling of protest from him and his associates sharing his views.<sup>62</sup> The arising bourgeois elements, whose economic interests at that time in a certain measure still coincided with the interests of the British industrial bourgeoisie, nevertheless sharply reacted to the ideological expansion of the colonizers. The very first sprouts of bourgeois nationalism found reflection in R. Roy's conception. This is just why it was so important for its creator not to lose the link with national tradition, and in so far as he had placed the sign of equality between it and Hinduism (in its reformed form), the problem of keeping his teaching within the confines of the latter acquired a special significance. He consciously sought in the past such a traditional philosophical school that could with the least tension provide a corroboration of his views of reformation.

An ardent fighter against polytheism and idol worship, he finds such a corroboration of his views in Vedanta, which also made it possible to bring down all the varied, and often hostile to one another, sects of Hinduism to a common denominator of its own kind. Here the texts of the Vedanta are adapted and edited by him in such a way as to have them respond best to his aims. This leads further—to the attempt to present this adapted Vedanta as a certain basis of all religions, not coming into conflict, as it were, with one another. In this sense Rammohun is a direct precursor of Ramakrishna and particularly Vivekananda.

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### INTEREST IN CHRISTIANITY

Rammohun's interest in Christianity, it seems to us, can properly be regarded as a consequence of this attempt. His familiarity with Christianity goes back to a comparatively later period of his life. In the years of his childhood and youth, Christianity was not yet a factor so perceptibly influencing the spiritual atmosphere in the country—the colonizers could at first do without cultural expansion, they were preoccupied mainly by purely material values. However, depending upon how they progressed from plunder in the form of usurpation to plunder in the form of administration, the role of the 'hunters of souls', propagators of the word of Christ, gradually increased.

Beginning with 1813, the work of the missionaries considerably intensified and was directed on the one hand to a criticism of Hinduism and Islam, and on the other—to a glorification of Christianity and conversion into it of local inhabitants. Incidentally, the proselytism of the missionaries had no practical success in those years despite the fact that they resorted to all sorts of cunning. In order to win over the Hindus to their side and overcome their fear of the consequences of loss of caste, they sometimes resorted to a direct deal, giving to those who abandoned the faith of their ancestors, a one-time sum of 500 rupees, and then arranging marriages between the new converts at their own expense.<sup>63</sup> This enticed a few Hindus from lower castes, but when the payment of 'compensation' was stopped, even those who had been christened earlier started retracing.

Since in such cases a formal return to Hinduism was not possible, the fight between the Christian missionaries belonging to various churches led to the fact that Indian individuals at times changed their religion twice in the course of one year, being Catholics for one half of the year and Protestants for the other half. Sometimes, as seen from the press reports of those years, the methods of the missionaries<sup>64</sup> gave rise to social scandals. With all this they could not boast of large successes.

Rammohun Roy wrote in 1824 that during the preceding six years two missionary organizations of Calcutta converted to Christianity only five persons.<sup>65</sup>

The criticism of the dogmas and practices of Hinduism was a more serious danger. It made many Hindus adopt an attitude of caution to ancient institutions. In this sense it had its influence on Rammohun too. The consequences, incidentally, of such a criticism were two-fold: some started feeling ashamed not only of their religion and their customs but also of everything Indian, assiduously copying the way of life of the British; in others it aroused an enhanced sense of national pride, made them look for support in the past, in the Indian cultural tradition. The arrogant and averse criticism of Hinduism, made simultaneously with exaltation of Christianity, was an expression of the idea of superiority of European colonizers to the 'natives' and to their 'heathen beliefs'. It was just this that R. Roy had in mind when he said that even the apostles carried the teaching of Christ to other countries and demonstrated there the advantage of their faith, but 'they were not the rulers of those countries'. He referred the missionaries, if they already wished to copy the example of the apostles, to independent countries—Turkey, Persia—adding sarcastically that these states were besides located far closer to England than India.

#### CONTACT WITH MISSIONARIES

The personal contacts of the Indian reformer with these missionaries began in 1815. This is not the place to go into all the details—there were reports published to the effect that R. Roy intended to adopt Christianity and leave his homeland for ever; the attempts to create an Anglo-Indian unitary mission are well known; after the publication of his book *The Principles of a Hindu* there was a deterioration in the relations—all this would take us too far from our subject. We should dwell here only on one point. It is sometimes opined, usually in the works of European scholars, that Rammohun felt the most powerful influence of Christianity, that towards the end



of his life he was inclined to change his religion, and that the Brahmo Samaj established by him in 1828 was some sort of a Christian sect within Hinduism. To us this view does not seem to be correct.

It is true that in Roy one can find a high estimate of the ethical aspects of Christian teaching; and, during the earliest years of his familiarity with missionaries, he himself sent to them his countrymen, probably very poor persons, usually on the condition that they would 'be paid regularly not less than eight Rupees a month'.<sup>66</sup> But the critical note on the religion of the Europeans sounded in him quite clearly and with the passing of years ever more strongly. He did not see any need of translations into Indian languages and of the spread of Christian literature,<sup>67</sup> placed the English missionaries in one row with the 'common conquerors of the past—Romans, Mohammedans, Genghis Khan'.<sup>68</sup> And about Christianity itself, in response to the apologetic statements of one of the opponents, said: 'I shall turn to history and call upon the Christian (pseudonym of the opponent.—author) to name any religion of the world which was the cause of so much bloodshed, cruelty, anger and war in the course of many centuries, as this one whose "favourable influence" he is glorifying.'<sup>69</sup> And at another place: 'The ideas which the missionaries preach are still less correlated to reason than those which the Muslims preached and are at times absurd in the same measure as the usual Hindu beliefs.'<sup>70</sup>

And, nevertheless, not at all wishing to see the spread of Christianity in India, and affirming that a number of his countrymen seek to possess the achievements of European science and culture but 'there are few who are interested in Christian religion'<sup>71</sup>, R. Roy in 1820 publishes a book under the title *Principles of a Hindu*, containing an exposition of the Gospel (mainly the Gospel of Matthews, with minor additions from other gospels). Does this mean that his standpoint had changed? Was the book indeed called upon to assist in the propagation of Christianity?

Although, unlike the translations of Vedanta made by him, there are no additions or annotations to it, the reproduction on the whole because of numerous omissions in the text is very far from what missionaries would have wished to see. The abbreviations are of a completely aim-oriented character. First of all, R. Roy totally discards the thematic line—the childhood of Jesus, his temptation by devil, his coming to Jerusalem, the expulsion of shroffs from the temple, the secret meeting, the treachery of Judas, the renunciation of Peter, the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Excluded thereafter are miracles—the warding off of devils, miracles with bread, walking on water, almost all sorts of healings. But preserved, moreover frequently repeated, from various gospels, are the parables about scribes and Pharisees accusing Christ's disciples of violating the ban with regard to food (supper with the sinners), and the healing of the dry-handed on Saturday, that is episodes showing violation by Christ of bans set by the dogma, not compatible with sound thinking ('do not eat with sinners'; 'do not do any work, even a good one, on a Saturday').

#### CONTEMPT FOR MIRACLES

Rammohun has an attitude of contempt for miracles on the whole and to the Christian in particular, as was only worthy of a staunch rationalist. The missionaries were specially perturbed by the fact that the descriptions of miracles had not simply been taken from the text; in his preface to the book the author had equated them with the fables of Hinduism. Besides, he denied 'miraculous deeds' performed by Christ with that impressive power which, in his view, the Hinduist legends (at least for the inhabitants of Asia) have, and, as an example, cited the legend of sacred Agastya who had swallowed and then emptied out the ocean and made the Vindhya mountains bow.

Further, R. Roy firmly rejects a number of most important conceptual positions of Christianity—the motif of expiation for

the sins of mankind, the dogma of Trinity, the divineness of Christ and his identification with God, the father, and also his resurrection from the grave and the Terrible trial. Particularly sharply he opposed the dogma of Trinity, resorting even to peculiar satirical scenes and comparing the teachings of the three apostles with Hindu polytheism.<sup>72</sup> (Incidentally, the teaching about Trinity is the corner-stone of all Christianity: 'In the Christian belief itself this is the basic or main dogma... Without it Christianity cannot survive',—this is what the complete Protestant theological dictionary states.<sup>73</sup>) For Rammohun Roy Christ is a human being, not different from other prophets of antiquity. Equally firmly he rejected the third apostasy—the spirit of the saint,—understanding by it only the divine power, and recognized only the first member of the symbol of faith—God, the father, who created heaven and earth, the world visible and invisible, though he also observes that in such a form God is present in all religions.<sup>74</sup> It is worth stressing that R. Roy's criticism of Christianity is based on profound study of Greek, Arabic, and ancient Hebrew texts.

What did his exposition of Christianity, void of most important dogmas, miracles and the thematic line of the Gospel lead to ? Why was it necessary for him to have such an adaptation of a foreign religion ? In it the Indian reformer stresses the ethical teaching, but at once makes the reservation that such norms in one form or the other can be found also in other religions and, accordingly, they are not the exclusive characteristic of the dogma of the Europeans.<sup>75</sup>

In his 'First Circular to Christians', written in defence of his book *The Principles of a Hindu*, Rammohun condenses this teaching still further, enumerating a number of moral precepts forming, as he assumes, the quintessence of Christianity: 'Love, O man, thy god, with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy reason' (*Math.* 22, 37; *Marc.* 12, 30; *Luc.* 10, 27); 'Love thy neighbour, like thy ownself' (*Math.* 22, 39); 'In everything do unto others as you wish to be done unto you' (*Math.* 7, 12). It is difficult to believe that Rammohun Roy takes the trouble

of expounding the Gospel only for the sake of acquainting his countrymen with these sermons.

Of course, the attention just to the moral side of religious teaching is in itself a reflection of his bourgeois-reformist position. But this is also an attempt to take away from the Hindus 'the hatred' for an alien religion and, by means of changes and abbreviations, make it best acceptable for absorption by Hinduism. In other words, taking away from it all that was in conflict with the latter (for instance, the divineness of Christ) or with his own reformist views (the dogma of Trinity), or simply with his sound mind (miracles), he weakened the pressing force of the Christian sermon in India. Naturally, the missionaries became tense with him, and accused him of 'distorting the essence of Christianity'.

It is necessary here to bear in mind one more circumstance: R. Roy's interest in this religion was further reinforced by the fact that Christianity as preached in India by the missionaries, was a religion which had already gone through bourgeois reformation. Rammohun's works are at the same time a contra-criticism, that is, a boldly masked reply to an apology for Christianity and to attacks on Hinduism from the side of the missionaries. It is remarkable that the methods of his appraisal of positions unacceptable to him remain the same as in the appraisal of doctrines of Hinduism, namely: aim-directed editing of ancient texts, contrasting their 'true', 'initial' idea of tradition to orthodox interpretations and practices; appeal to the healthy mind as the highest criterion. Here, it seems to us, the task was reduced to the weakening of the attack on Hinduism by Christianity and converting the latter into an ally of its own kind; Hinduism is seen as a religion assimilating Christianity which, in its turn, has been specially adapted by Rammohun Roy. The base for such an assimilation and creation of a universal religion of its own kind is provided by Vedanta.

#### REFORMIST TEACHING

Roy's reformist teaching emerges from the confluence of

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three cultural traditions—Hindu, Muslim, and Christian—and all the three great religions lose in this teaching the characteristic features responsible for their definite ‘incompatibility’. In a simplified form R. Roy’s religion is an abstract spirituality, an idealistically understood unity of the world and mutual relationship of the whole being in it (Vedanta), plus Christian ethics and Islamic monotheism (Christianity for him is, just like Hinduism, polytheistic). It discards all that is characteristic in the three dogmas, stressing some common basic principles. Its religious universalism lies not in the assertion of the truth of various religions (as in Ramakrishna) and not in the attempt to create a new world religion, but rather in the enrichment of Hinduism (‘purified’) with elements of other religions (only of those which at that time had some contact with Hinduism—any mention of others, say, of Buddhism, is totally absent). In his system Hinduism occupies a special place: both Islam and Christianity are only adjuncts. But even those elements which seem to have been borrowed from them, are characteristic not only of these religions but also in no less measure, in Rammohun’s view, of Hinduism. Thus, in the Upanishads, he finds ethical principles, completely coinciding with Christian sermons; he spent half his life to prove the monotheistic character of ancient Hinduism. And when we say that Islamic monotheism was a part of his teaching, this only means that his own views were formulated under the influence of Islam, which served him as a starting point in his quests of monotheism in Hinduism.

### RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALISM: BRAHMO SAMAJ

Rammohun Roy’s religious universalism was the consequence and peculiar expression of his anti-sectarian views; and objectively manifest in it was the tendency of unification, on a common base, of essence of various dogmas, particularly Hindus and Muslims. Universalism, like other positions of the teachings of R. Roy, formed the pivot of the programme of the religious-reformist society, Brahmo Samaj.<sup>76</sup> Its establish-

ment was the most important outcome of Rammohun Roy's work. The Brahmo Samaj was not the first organization of R. Roy and his like-minded associates, but it was the most stable, and later played a great role in the social life of the country. Apparently, some sort of a circle existed already during the years when Rammohun was in the service of the East India Company,—something of the type of a discussion club where, possibly, the polemical arrows of its founder were sharpened. With the transfer of R. Roy to Calcutta, the place of this circle was taken by Atmiya Sabha (Friendly Meeting), formed in 1815. It included an extremely restricted number of persons, and its natural centre of gravity and leader was Rammohun Roy surpassing other members ('brothers', as they called one another) not only in philosophical training and knowledge but also in age (more than twice of most of them—he was then around forty, Dwarkanath Tagore only twenty, Prasanna Kumar Tagore fourteen, and Nanda Kishore Basu, the father of the later well-known leader of Adi Brahmo Samaj, Rajnarayan Basu—only thirteen). We shall in passing observe here that almost all these young associates of Rammohun Roy belonged to rich Brahmin families and had a good knowledge of English, had an idea of the achievements of European thought, and some of them were in the service of the British. R. Roy's Indian biographer, Iqbal Singh, while stating that many leaders of Atmiya Sabha are now almost forgotten and remembered only in relationship to their famous sons and grandsons adds: 'But in their own time they undoubtedly represented the *avant-garde* of a society, at last beginning the slow transition from mediaevalism to a modern outlook.'<sup>77</sup>

The members of the Atmiya Sabha met once a week and read carefully selected Vedic texts (everything that came in conflict with monotheistic views was excluded). Then followed the singing of hymns (old and new, written by R. Roy or other participants) and musical improvisations. Practical work was also done. Later, they joined in the struggle for the abolition of 'sati' system, often at the risk of their life, and sought

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to convince women that they should refuse to comply with this custom. The Atmiya Sabha remained in existence for four years. The meetings had gradually shifted from the house of Rammohun to the houses of his friends, had become irregular and by 1819 stopped altogether. The Brahmo Samaj, emerging nine years later, undoubtedly grew out of quite a broad campaign against the 'sati' system but was in many ways the development and continuation of Atmiya Sabha. Besides, both the societies had largely the same members. In the very beginning, the work of Brahmo Samaj was not different from that of Atmiya Sabha—there were the two-hour meetings on Saturdays of like-minded persons, in specially rented premises, which was paid for by 'many rich friends' of R. Roy. Here, the chantings of passages from the Vedas and interpretations of the texts of the Upanishads were followed by the reading of a message, partly written by R. Roy himself. From time to time, the meetings were attended by Christian missionaries too.<sup>78</sup>

One peculiarity of these meetings (which, incidentally, in their form, rather reminded one more of a Christian prayer meeting, than a Hinduist worship to God) must at once be noted here: the caste differences duly mattered here to some extent—the texts from the Vedas were read only by Brahmins, and that too separated from the audience by a curtain.

The first such meeting took place on 20 August 1828. At that time the Brahmo Samaj was still to have an organizational stature—there were no statues, no membership, no special building. But compared with the Atmiya Sabha, the new circle attracted the attention of considerably wider circles of Bengalis, more precisely, of the Calcutta society. This was explained not by any differences of principles in their work, but by the growing popularity of Rammohun Roy himself, above all as a fighter against the 'sati' system. And the further destiny of the Brahmo Samaj was, at the initial stages, directly associated with the split intensifying in the society in its attitude just to this aspect of reformist propaganda. The events were

accelerated by the official ban on 'sati' (December 1829) which both the associates and the opponents of R. Roy rightly regarded as his major victory, but which also made both consolidate their ranks.

The organisational split building up behind the scene over a long period of time, finally climaxed just in a week and a half. On 14 January 1830 the city council meetings accepted two petitions addressed to the Governor General, Lord W. Bentinck, both containing a demand for revoking the ban on 'sati' and signed in one case by 340 and in the other by 800 residents of Calcutta, supported by 120 pandits. On 16 January the adherents of Rammohun Roy sent a deputation to W. Bentinck with a counter petition signed by 300 Hindus and 800 Christians, expressing gratitude to the Government for the ban on 'sati'.

The next day, the participants of a fresh meeting (held in Sanskrit College) of the supporters of 'sati' system passed a resolution to appeal to the powers in London. And there itself was formed an organization of the opponents of the reforms—Dharma Sabha.<sup>79</sup> Those present collected money (more than 11,000 rupees) for the funds for the new organization. On 23 January took place the formal opening of a permanent building (temple) for Brahmo Samaj.

Both the sides did not stop here. Rammohun wrote and published a reply to 120 pandits, who had supported the petition on 14 January 1830; his opponents started an active publicity campaign in defence of 'sati' and orthodox Hinduism through the newspaper 'Samachar Chandrika'.<sup>80</sup> This newspaper defined the aims and tasks of the Dharma Sabha like this: to help the 'notables and the nobles to unite and constantly look up for measures for preserving our religion and our excellent customs'.<sup>81</sup> R. Roy reacted by carrying on a polemic on the pages of the newspaper 'Sambad Kaumudi', and addressed not merely to the 'nobles and notables'. 'The common people became the participants of this great conflict, for the treatises of the reformers, written most frequently in



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easy Bengali, were addressed to them in no lesser measure than to the enlightened circles.’<sup>82</sup>

### UNIFICATION OF REFORMISTS

In such an environment the opening of the special temple of Brahmo Samaj meant the emergence of a definite centre for unifying the advocates of reforms. On a purely religious level such a temple was not necessary and its creation to some extent was a deviation from the main principles of the reformist teaching. According to R. Roy, a religion completely void of all and every kind of ritual had become a purely individual affair; the question was of some spiritual union of the believer and the God, for which there was no need of a special temple. But a temple was necessary as a meeting place for the like-minded persons, as a base of its own kind of the organization, and, what is particularly of interest, not necessarily religious. The religious-reformist society at that stage was in embryo and was an organization, more social-reformist and even political. Later, with the coming up of social-political national organizations, many functions of the Brahmo Samaj rightly passed over to them.

The fact that a temple, according to the idea of its founder, was called upon not merely to serve purely religious aims but to be a club of some kind, is clear from a document about its establishment. The persons entrusted, it stated, ‘must always allow the use of the said premises...as a place for public meetings of all peoples without any exception’.<sup>83</sup> The Brahmos could belong to various sects and trends of Hinduism, could even preach other religions, the Brahmo Samaj temple was a place where they met for common prayers.<sup>84</sup>

As believed by Rammohun, his organization had to be democratic (in contrast to the Dharma Sabha); the caste differences were not to be taken into account, though in practice, as stated, this was not always observed and later, after his death, not observed at all.

The other points of the document stressed the singularly

monotheistic character of divine service taking place within the walls of the temple: the worship of God under any name, in any form, by means of any offerings (specially, through sacrifice of living beings)<sup>85</sup> was forbidden; it was pointed out that the prayers and sermons must help in arousing compassion, cultivating integrity and generosity, and strengthening the bonds between the followers of various religious systems.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, all main ideas of Rammohun Roy—monotheism, rejection of idol worship, struggle against sectarianism creating divisions among the Indians, the aspiration to find a common basis for various religions—found their embodiment in the work of the Brahmo Samaj.

In November 1830 R. Roy sailed away with an official mission to England, leaving behind the organization which had only been just formed, with few members, though influential, as a flexible instrument for putting his ideas into practice. It is difficult to say what form he would have later given to this organization,<sup>87</sup> but he was not destined to come back. On 27 September 1833 he died in Bristol, where he was cremated too without any rites.<sup>88</sup>

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF RAMMOHUN'S ACTIVITIES

R. Roy's activity is of exceptionally great significance. He, for the first time in India, critically reassessed, from the positions of enlightenment, the traditional religious dogmas, divested them of their irrevocable authority, brought them out in the court of reason and sound sense. He posed and solved in his own way the problems of reinterpretation of tradition in the bourgeois-reformist spirit, in the spirit of achievement of national unity and continuance of succession. He showed the direction to be followed. But the religious reformation all the main features of which had their origin in the teaching of Rammohun Roy, did not at all develop hereafter in a straight line. One of the reasons for this was the circumstance that his teaching meant a sufficiently sharp departure from orthodox Hinduism.<sup>89</sup>

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### REFORMIST SOCIETIES OF THE MIDDLE AND THE LATER HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

#### **Bengal**

After Rammohun Roy's death, the Brahmo Samaj established by him deteriorated and its work almost stopped, although his friends tried to continue the venture—Dwarakanath Tagore provided the financial support, R. Vidyavagish conducted the now rare divine service. Debendranath Tagore recalls his first visit to the temple like this: 'I saw a Dravida Brahmin reciting the Upanishads before sunset in one of the side rooms of the Samaj. The audience consisted only of Ramchandra Vidyavagish, Isvar Chandra Nyayaratna and one or two more Brahmins. The *Sudras* were not allowed. After the sunset R. Vidyavagish and Isvar Chandra Nyayaratna seated themselves on the dais; here the Brahmins, *Sudras* and members of other castes were all equal. I noticed that the persons present were very few. On the right hand of the dais four or five worshippers sat on a white carpet spread on the floor. On the left hand there were a few chairs on which sat three or four guests.'<sup>90</sup>

Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) who played a perceptible role in the reformation of Hinduism and, in particular, in the work of the Brahmo Samaj, was a product of Rammohun's school and son of one of his closest friends and associates. Despite the fact that Debendranath's father (incidentally, one of the earliest Indian industrialists) was a highly educated, liberal, 'Europeanized' aristocrat, his son was brought up by the family in orthodox-religious spirit. However, under the influence of Rammohun Roy, he started having a sceptical attitude to idol worship and, although he continued his attempts to 'find God', he, in his own words, tried 'to seek not through blind faith, but with the help of the light of knowledge.'<sup>91</sup>

In these quests of his, Debendranath Tagore turned to the *Mahabharata* and the Upanishads. His studies did not go far, but the discussion on ancient texts, discussions and arguments



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it grew numerically—on account of 'rich and influential persons'.<sup>84</sup> But the society did not become widely popular in the circles of Bengali intelligentsia. And, when in 1841, Tagore thought of celebrating its second anniversary, he had to distribute invitation cards written in his own hand to the main offices and firms of Calcutta (which incidentally shows what social strata the society addressed itself to).

The proposal to merge the Tattvabodhini Sabha with the Brahmo Samaj and thus to strengthen both the organizations matured roughly around this very time. It is possible that such a decision could be arrived at largely because of the personal friendship of Debendranath with R. Vidyavagish and the associations of his father (Dwarakanath) with Brahmo Samaj, associations not only spiritual but also completely material. It is known, for instance, that Dwarakanath was one of the most influential shareholders of this society<sup>85</sup> and, as stated above, it continued to exist after Rammohun's death only because of his financial support.

For discussing the questions relating to the merger, Debendranath made his first visit to the temple of the Samaj. For two years both the societies, though formally united, continued to function separately, but in 1842 these were officially merged. The joining of Brahmo Samaj by Tagore and a group of his associates was solemnly celebrated.

## CHANGES IN BRAHMO SAMAJ

Tagore, from the very beginning, introduced major changes in the practices of the Brahmo Samaj which till then did not have a strict organizational structure and was simply a place where any willing person could come to. Hereafter, everybody associated with it had to go through a special initiation ceremony (Tagore himself and his friends were initiated into Brahmoism by R. Vidyavagish) and recite the words of an oath developed specially for this purpose. Disturbed by the non-conformity of the day to day life of the followers of the Samaj to the principles of R. Roy's teaching, and also by the

fact that those elements of Hinduism which the builder of the society had fought against (for example, the dogma of earthly manifestation of God, particularly in the image of Rama), had penetrated into the very sermon of the Brahmo Samaj, Debendranath introduced into the oath obligations not to take part in idol worship ceremonies and to worship god only with love and with 'deeds liked by him'.<sup>96</sup>

Soon he became the acknowledged head of Brahmo Samaj, its *Acharya*. One of his first steps was the removal of the division, by caste (which had upset him during his first visit to the temple), of those present at the time of divine service—the partitions inside the building were removed, and hereafter all those coming to pray remained in one hall. During the early period of his work, Tagore set himself two aims: to attract the maximum possible persons to the society to swell it numerically (this he was in a considerable measure able to do; there began the influx of the 'most capable young Bengalis'<sup>97</sup>) and fix this influx organizationally.

As already said, all the new entrants had to take an oath; besides, he saw to it strictly that the followers of the new faith did not take part in idol worship ceremonies. True, he did not force his views on those who were not members of the society: such ceremonies were regularly held in his own home, but he himself avoided them, and on the days of big festivals like Durga Puja etc. he went away from Calcutta. Tagore introduced one more novelty—the daily morning prayer. For this he suggested the famous *Gayatri mantra*<sup>98</sup> (known also as *Savitri mantra*) from the *Rigveda*, which Rammohun Roy, in his time, wrote so enthusiastically about.

The basic manual used for the Brahmo divine service was the *Mahanirvana-tantra*. It is believed, this was not just accidental: the *Mahanirvana-tantra* is not mentioned in ancient literature and is, in all probability, the work of modern times. In any case, J. Farquhar believes that the earliest commentary (from those extant) on it is written 'in the hand of Hariharananda Bharati, the pandit of R. Roy himself',<sup>99</sup> and one cannot

rule out the possibility that he himself is the author of this *tantra*. In the words of the English translator of the text, the *Mahanirvana-tantra* is valued more by 'those Indians who prefer reformed Hinduism to tantrics themselves'.<sup>100</sup> Irrespective of the actual date of composition of this work, Debendranath was undoubtedly attracted by the sermon of worship to a single God contained in it.

Soon, Tagore introduced into the practice new, specially Brahmo ceremonies, different from the orthodox ones. An impetus for this was provided by the death of his father Dwarakanath in Europe in 1846. Learning of the death of his father, Debendranath categorically refused to perform the *shraddha* ceremony (the traditional ceremony of remembrance), which gravely spoiled his relations with his relatives<sup>101</sup> and found a wide public resonance, raising a great hue and cry in the social sphere. Instead, he conceived a Brahmo ritual, which incidentally did not interfere with the other members of the family performing separately all the traditional ceremonies.

Later, D. Tagore also formulated other ceremonies, particularly relating to marriage, specially of a daughter (1861). On the whole, these were not much different from the usual ceremonies, except on two points—absence in it of such an important part as the ceremony of worship to fire, and also of the ceremony of bringing a *shalagram* (Vaishnavite sacred stone of black colour, the symbol of domestic hearth). Debendranath's innovation was accepted in very few families of the Brahmo Samaj; even amongst his like-minded associates the validity of marriage performed in such a way evoked doubts. However, later, this very ceremony was juxtaposed by the leaders of the Adi Brahmo Samaj to that civil marriage which, under the pressure of K. Sen and his followers, was legalized in 1872. Going further, we shall observe that in the last years of his life, D. Tagore, gradually becoming ever more conservative in his views, developed a complete ritual (which also included the ceremony of wearing a Brahmin's cord), considering and retaining all ancient customs and ceremonies if these

were not too sharply different from the credo of the Brahmos.<sup>102</sup>

Thus, already in the very beginning of his work as a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, Tagore (although the acceptance of monotheism and rejection of idol worship remained basic for the Brahmos) endowed the society with a completely different character. The discussion club of like-minded persons, as it was at the time of Rammohun Roy, was turned into a religious organization with a precise structure. The taking of oath, the introduction of obligatory daily prayer, the presence of a liturgical anthology (*Mahanirvana-tantra*) of its own, and lastly, their own ceremonies, meant a factual transformation of Brahmo Samaj into a new sect within Hinduism,—true, different from the others in its reformist, bourgeois, protestant spirit.

#### DWARAKANATH VS RAMMOHUN

Tagore differed with R. Roy in three important matters. First, despite his familiarity with European scientific thought and Christian theology, he was guided exclusively by Hindu traditions. He was not interested in an association, and more so, in a synthesis of religions. He deviated from the positions of Hinduism, quite decisively recast it, but did not incorporate into it any elements from other religions. With all his reformism he did not go too far, either in words or in deeds, from the religion of his ancestors, and tried to retain an association with tradition, as though bringing to the Indian soil the teaching of his predecessor, practically void of national traits. Secondly, unlike Rammohun who on the whole made a high assessment of Vedanta, though treating it in his own way, Debendranath in his maturer years had a negative attitude towards this system (and it is not clear what makes J. Farquhar call him a Vedantist).<sup>103</sup> The ideas of the unity of individual soul and world spirit, the dissolving of one into the other,<sup>104</sup> were totally unacceptable to him. He writes in his autobiography that he wanted first to depend upon the Upanishads,<sup>105</sup> but when he encountered the concepts of *sohamasmi* (I am He) and *tattvamasi*



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(thou art that), he was disappointed: 'The Upanishads do not meet our needs, and cannot fill our hearts.'<sup>106</sup> Thirdly, (and this is the foremost), giving, as was noted above, a national tinge to his teaching, Tagore at the same time took the most important step in the direction of intensifying the reformation. As compared with R. Roy, he rejected the dogma of infallibility and divine inspiration of the Vedas, and after them of the other sacred books of Hinduism. It is difficult to reappraise the significance of this step for India of that time.

This last point needs greater elaboration. In the initial period of his work, Debendranath, probably under the influence of the works of R. Roy, in so far as he himself did not then have the slightest notion of the contents of the Vedas, firmly defended their infallibility: 'We consider Vedas, and only Vedas, the basis of our belief !' However, he had soon to look for a proof for reinforcing his position, for it came under double pressure—from outside, from the side of the Christian missionaries and from within, from the side of the group of radically minded Samajists, headed by A. K. Datta, the editor of the newspaper '*Tattvabodhini Patrika*'. Tagore decided to refer to the original source. In 1844, he deputed to Varanasi a special person with the task of studying the sacred texts and giving on return a precise reply whether the teaching of the Vedas does correspond to the monotheistic conception of Brahmo Samaj. The very statement of the question is of interest; it leaves no scope for blind faith, and the human reason is made the chief criterion.

## STUDY OF THE VEDAS

Within a year three more persons were deputed to Varanasi; each of them had to familiarise himself with one Veda. The study continued, and in 1847 Debendranath himself went to Varanasi. He rented a big hall and called the Brahmins, the experts in the Vedas, who for a few days read aloud the texts and commented on them, and because of arguments as to which part was more sacred, these texts were read a number

of times. Eventually, Tagore officially denounced the dogma of the infallibility of the Vedas, though for some time still tried to affirm that in the form of deification of forces of nature the ancient Indian worshipped one God. At a 'meeting' of its own kind of the Samajists (thanks to Tagore's efforts, the branches of Brahmo Samaj were by this time existing also in Dacca, Rangpur, and other cities of Bengal) it was resolved that the 'teachings of the texts could be accepted only to the extent they harmonized with our inner world'.

#### NO INTENTION TO ABANDON HINDUISM

Despite all this, Debendranath had in any case no intention to abandon Hinduism. In 1848 he prepared a typical prayer book for the needs of the society—a compilation from the Upanishads, the Laws of Manu and the *Mahabharata*, under the name of *Brahmo Dharma Grantha*, which he himself regarded as a collection of 'truths sent down by god'.<sup>107</sup> The main principles of the Brahmo belief were set forth in an appendix to the book:

1. In the beginning there was nothing, besides the Supreme Essence, which created this world.
2. This is the single God, God of Truth, of the Infinite, of Freedom, of Virtue and Power, Eternal and Omniscient, *Ekamevadvityam* (one without a parallel).
3. In his worship lies our salvation in this world and in the next.
4. To love God and to do deeds for the pleasure of God meant his worship.<sup>108</sup>

It is this book that began to be read in place of the Vedas and Upanishads at the meetings of Brahmo Samaj. Thus, a denunciation of the idea of infallibility of the Vedas did not result in a complete denunciation of the Canon, simply the texts consecrated by tradition made place for the texts chosen in accordance with 'reason and intuition'. This was a break with the dogma but not with religion. Besides, denunciation

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of the idea of infallibility of the Vedas meant development of bourgeois reformation and had far-reaching consequences.

### REJECTION OF IDOL WORSHIP

Continuing the line of Rammohun Roy, Debendranath rejected idol worship and polytheism, and, in still greater measure than his predecessor, appealed to reason. The world as understood by Tagore was real, its focus being the man. Each dogma had to be weighed in the scales of reason and discarded if not accepted by reason; this is how the concepts of *karma*, *maya*, doctrine of the transmigration of souls and *avatars*, forming the philosophical nucleus of Hinduism, were discarded. The negation of the divine origin of the Vedas, and accordingly of their infallibility, was the logical development of the rationalistic approach to tradition. But D. Tagore's positions were marked by contradiction: rejecting the old dogmas and customs, he, on their basis, created new ones,—true, recast in accordance with his monotheistic views.

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### EMERGENCE OF KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

At the time of the uprising in 1857, Debendranath was in the Himalayas, leading the life of a recluse,—the inclination for meditation and concern for his own enlightenment intensified in him with the passing of years. On return to Calcutta, he for the first time met Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) who had just recently joined the Brahmo Samaj.

The period of their work together immediately after the uprising is a period of intensely growing activity of the society in the field of reforms, relating to the social and the day to day way of life, equally important to both of them. Later, Tagore practically goes away from the scene, although he was destined to live long yet—he outlived Keshab Chandra, Ramakrishna, and also Vivekananda, though his active role had ended with the first split in the Brahmo Samaj (1866). For K. Sen this

period (including a few subsequent years—up to his journey to England) was the most fruitful. Besides, the period of work together had in it the seeds of future splits and differences of opinion, which came to the surface fairly soon, although considerably toned down because of their personal friendship.

The representative of a well-known Bengali family, a Vaishnavite, a product of the Hindu College, a young bank employee, K. Sen joined the ranks of the Brahmo Samaj in the absence of any leader of the society. Somehow (possibly, because of the all-known orthodoxy of the Sen family), the procedure of his admission differed from the usual one—he simply signed the oath sent to him by post. Incidentally, his affiliation to Tagore's organization remained secret for some time, and there soon followed, first a sharp deterioration in relations with his relatives (on the ground of K. Sen's refusal to take part in the initiation ceremony), and then a formal break. He and his wife were forced to leave the paternal house (this time, on the ground of the invitation to his wife to attend along with him, a ceremonial meeting of the Brahmo Samaj). For some time they lived under the hospitable roof of Tagore's house. This strengthened the mutual sympathy of both the leaders. The influence of K. Sen on Debendranath gradually intensified, and soon they both became equally the leaders of the organization, which was formalized by the appointment of the former to the post of an *Acharya* of the society in April 1862 (Tagore became *pradhan Acharya*).

This high rank, obtained by K. Sen in just five years after joining the Brahmo Samaj was a recognition of his authority. As the organization grew, there was marked within it a split into the conservative wing rallying around D. Tagore, and the radical group drifting towards K. Sen. Since Tagore himself was at this time undoubtedly under his influence, the young radicals managed in a considerable measure to change the trend of the practical work of the society which, in its turn, deepened the differences. After K. Sen became *Acharya*, the group of more moderate leaders left the Brahmo Samaj and

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set up a society called Upasana Samaj, which, true, had only a short life.<sup>109</sup>

Under the leadership of K. Sen, the Brahmo Samaj, of course, virtually turned from a religious sect into a society for reforms in social and day to day way of life.<sup>110</sup> First of all, it is necessary here to stress its sharp anti-caste character. The caste system had been rejected also by Rammohun Roy and in some measure by Debendranath Tagore (we shall recall at least the partitions he got removed in the hall of prayers), but in the former this rejection was the outcome of the total meaning of his teaching and did not take the form of active struggle; in the latter however it meant the equality of all believers before God. Keshab Chandra propagated the sense of equality amongst all persons. The struggle against caste differences became the pivot of the entire activity of Brahmo-samajists during the said period.

Keshab Sen considered it an equally integral condition of membership of the society as the rejection of idol worship. Proceeding from this, he demanded that all the 'twice born' Samajists should refuse to wear the sacred cord, which evoked a serious reaction of the conservatives. At the initial stages Debendranath accepted this condition and even replaced a few second-level-preachers of Brahmo Samaj who did not wish to comply with the ban.

How hard it was to break the resistance of the followers of the tradition and what decisive departure from it this small innovation appeared to be, is seen from the fact that the fathers of some Samajists, who opposed the wearing of the sacred cord, tried to commit suicide, not to speak of such extreme steps as driving away from the house, or depriving from maintenance etc., the persons who had departed from the practice.

## WIDOW MARRIAGE

No less severe was the reaction evoked by the movement for widow remarriage, the direct continuance of Rammohun

Roy's struggle against the custom of 'sati' and started at the initiative of Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar before Keshab Chandra Sen had joined the organization. The first such ceremony was held in 1856. One of the eye-witnesses, Sivanath Sastri, later an eminent leader of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, recalls this event: 'The crowd of spectators was so big that there was no vacant space on the bridge, and many fell down into large open holes which were then there in the streets of Calcutta. When the ceremony ended, it was discussed everywhere—in bazaars, shops, streets... in offices, and in remote villages, where women frankly argued with each other.'<sup>111</sup>

The same author also speaks of the hardships falling to the lot of those who were directly 'guilty' of these ceremonies—they were boycotted by relatives, friends and even servants: 'nobody wanted to serve with them'.<sup>112</sup> K. Sen took active part in the campaign for widow remarriage, he even played a role in an agitative drama, specially written for the purpose, which had in Calcutta a great though somewhat scandalous success.<sup>113</sup>

#### INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

The most important step in the struggle against caste prejudices was the marriages between people of different castes supported by the followers of Keshab Chandra. The first such marriage took place in August 1862. Debendranath Tagore who thought that on this question the *Acharya* had gone a bit too far, did not attend the ceremony. The frequency of inter-caste marriages sharply intensified the differences between the conservatives and the radicals.

K. Sen introduced a great deal of novelty in the day to day work of the Brahmo Samaj. For example, in 1860 the members of the society came to the aid of the starving people with money, food, valuables etc. India knew nothing of this earlier. In place of fervid religious discussions or at least along with them, the organization took up purely practical work. What is important is also that this was the first adverting of

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religious reformers to common people, to the masses, although the interest itself was in the nature of doing good.

K. Sen intensified the propagandist activity of the Brahmo Samaj, visited Bombay and Madras in 1864, where he preached the main tenets of Brahmoism. These trips in some measure had the effect of creating religious-reformist societies of the same type in those centres. Already in 1859, along with Tagore, he had opened the Brahmo Vidyalaya,—a school called upon to prepare the future followers of the Brahmo faith. This school where both the leaders gave lectures,—Debendranath in Bengali and Keshab Chandra in English,—which had its own teachers, its own system of examinations and even its own diplomas, played an important role in uniting the progressive Bengali youth. The nucleus of the school was formed by members of the Fraternity of Goodwill founded by K. Sen in 1857 before his joining the Brahmo Samaj.<sup>114</sup> The contacts with the youth were exceptionally characteristic of the social activity of the reformer in this period (not in vain was his first work entitled *To Thee, Young Bengal*!).

### COUNTERACTING THE CONSERVATIVES

To counteract the conservative wing, K. Sen and his young associates sought to democratize the society from within and convert it into a mass social-religious organization. For this, its head suggested that voting, with the minority yielding necessarily to the majority, could be the main method of reaching general solutions, and that the controversial questions could be regularized by calling a special meeting (*pratinidhi sabha*) with a representation of delegates of all the reformist Samajs of India of which by January 1866 there were fifty-four all over India—fifty in Bengal alone.<sup>115</sup> The conservatives were unable to accept this, and the schism which had been building up for a long time finally took place in October 1865.

### GROUND FOR THE SPLIT

The immediate ground for the split was the change in Tagore's stand concerning the wearing of the Brahmin's cord.

When a strong hurricane damaged the building of the Brahmo Samaj and the prayer meetings were shifted to his own house, he suddenly restored the rights of the preachers whose services he had earlier refused because they had not accepted the ban, justifying it with the British logic that in his house he was free to do what he wanted. Of course, the causes for the split were far more deep-rooted. Debendranath who had become all the more moderate with the passing of years, did not accept the broad programme of reforms, relating to social and day to day way of life, as prepared by K. Sen; he felt particularly hurt by marriages between members of different castes. One cannot say that he was a consistent opponent of the changes; he insisted that these should take place slowly and gradually: 'We must fear moving too fast in matters of social change so that we do not seem cut off from the general masses whom we have to direct and sublimate.'<sup>116</sup> 'He preferred to make the really essential changes of the time',<sup>117</sup> said one of his sons (Satyendranath) half a century later. There are grounds to assume that Debendranath Tagore did not like K. Sen's pro-British moods and also his ambitiousness then just taking shape but appearing afterwards in full measure. The split in the society was not an event but a process: for a whole year talks had been going on between the two leaders. The prayers of both the groups of Brahmosamajists were held in one building but on different days. The talks yielded nothing, and the split was officially formulated in November 1866. Tagore's group, which possessed all the property and the building, started calling itself Adi (original) Brahmo Samaj, and K. Sen's group took the name of Bharatvarshiya (Indian) Brahmo Samaj. This name distinctly reflected Keshab Chandra's dream of building up an all-India organization and an all-Indian religion, later embodied to some extent in the *Nava Vidhan* society (The Church of the New Dispensation).

Many years later, after K. Sen's death, Tagore wrote: 'The split in the Brahmo Samaj is to be regretted; possibly this has been harmful to the task; united, we would have been



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stronger, but it is not worth getting disheartened. The seeds are sown, and these will bear fruit when god wills it.'<sup>118</sup>

As stated, Debendranath Tagore did not engage himself in active work during the last forty years of his life. The split came to him as such a shock that he refused to take any part in the affairs of the Samaj, leaving its management to his children and friends, and spent a greater part of the day in seclusion and silent prayer.<sup>119</sup> The mutual sympathy still kept him associated with K. Sen, but the previous relation between them could not be restored.

The Adi Brahmo Samaj definitely became the 'protestant' sect within Hinduism, Tagore proceeded from the formula—'Brahmoism is Hinduism',<sup>120</sup> although many aspects of its teaching, above all, the struggle against idol worship and denunciation of the idea of infallibility of the Vedas, remained unacceptable for the orthodox group. Some of the speeches and actions of the virtual head of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, Rajnarayan Basu, asserting the 'superiority of Hindu religion and culture over Christian theology and civilization',<sup>121</sup> echoed the idea that the Hindus should be regarded as a separate nation.

Debendranath himself became ever more inclined to pantheism towards the end of his life.<sup>122</sup> In his day to day life he revived many Hindu practices. His religious conception (deification of nature, acceptance of the reality of the world) and the renewed attention to man are of interest because of their influence on the formation of views of Rabindranath Tagore, but have no connection with the course of reformation.

### BHARATVARSHIYA BRAHMO SAMAJ

As regards the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj, already the very first resolution of the new organization stressed its all-India character; it was open to all, irrespective of sex and caste. K. Sen sought to expand the social composition of the society. This was to be done by increasing its numerical strength, observing the principle of equality of property (its members

took the vow of poverty) and democratizing the methods of work. The last of these was expressed in the turning to traditional popular Bengali forms of mass worship to God, characteristic of the medieval *Bhakti* movement and, in particular, of the sect of the followers of Chaitanya (1485-1533).<sup>123</sup> Keshab Chandra introduced into the Brahmoist divine service the playing of folk musical instruments—drums and cymbals—chorus singing, rhythmic clapping of hands, in other words, decisively broke off with the system hitherto in vogue, and took a step in the direction of the popular, including rural festivals. Moreover, he brought the divine service to the streets of the city, arranging whole processions in which usually he himself too took part. Barefooted and bareheaded, he led the processions, loudly singing religious hymns.

It is interesting that one of his biographers, a friend of his childhood and an associate, P. C. Majoomdar, asserts that roughly before 1867 Keshab Chandra was not a religious man in the full sense of the word. This is all the more interesting because, when Sen's religiosity started showing itself, it, despite his outward adherence to medieval Vaishnavite cults, had a Christian stamp, with passing of years getting all the more obvious. At the initial stages his Christianity had the character of 'pan-Asiatic nationalism'. In his lecture 'Jesus Christ: Europe and Asia' he said: 'Is Jesus really not an Asian ? . . . Christianity is virtually created and developed by the Asians in Asia. When I think about it, my love for Jesus is increased hundredfold.' Christ, in Keshab Chandra's interpretation, becomes the greatest son of Asia, and his teaching—that spiritual basis on which the unification of 'Europe and Asia, East and West' is possible.<sup>124</sup> K. Sen's closer association with the British helped in strengthening the thought of such unification.

It must be said that the period preceding his visit to England was marked by a perceptible depression in the work of the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj in the field of reforms concerning social and day-to-day way of life. True, K. Sen and his followers

had just then started the campaign for the adoption of the law of civil marriage, but this can be considered rather a culmination of the previous stage. During that period the 'K. Sen cult' itself had started building up in the organization—he was called the 'Saviour', 'Master', 'Lord',<sup>125</sup> and hymns were composed in his honour and legends told.<sup>126</sup> This was condemned even by Keshab Chandra's own associates. They voiced their protests against such practices even on the pages of newspapers, and in this one could see the signs of another split in the offing.

On 22 August 1869 took place the opening of the permanent temple of the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta. The constitution of the organization adopted there and then, in many respects, reminds one of Rammohun Roy's constitution—it contained clauses about denunciation of idol worship, polytheism, sacrifices, and also of the acceptance of ancient sacred texts as 'infallible divine word'.<sup>127</sup> But Keshab Chandra, like D. Tagore, created his own holy writ—a compilation from the Vedas, Koran, Avesta, and, of course, Bible. In this way, Tagore's rejection of the idea of infallibility of the Vedas was the starting-point for two tendencies—the first found its expression in the compilation from Hindu texts; the second in the compilation from the works of *various* religions.

In 1870, K. Sen (just like R. Roy 40 years earlier) set sail for England, where he was received with great pomp.<sup>128</sup> After his return home K. Sen continued the campaign for the passing of laws of civil marriage, envisaged first for all Indians and then (in view of the protests from the side of orthodox Hindus) only for Brahmoists, and then (in view of protests from the side of Adi Brahmo Samajists) only for the followers of Keshab Chandra. Despite strong opposition, the law came into force on 19 March 1872. It permitted inter-caste marriages and widow remarriage within the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj, but banned polygamy and child marriage (the minimum age of marriage for the boy was fixed at 18 and for the girl at 14).

## DECLINE OF BHARATVARSHIYA BRAHMO SAMAJ

The passing of this law was a solid achievement, though its operation did not go beyond the limits of the society even nominally. The Adi Brahmo Samaj continued to follow its own rules and its own ritual of marriage, fixed in his time by Debendranath Tagore; outside Brahmo Samaj the law was not popular—its observance, rather than its violation, was an exception. Thus, from 1869 to 1894, that is, for 25 years, only 75 cases of widow remarriage were registered.<sup>129</sup> As regards raising of the minimum age limit for marriage, one of the earliest in the Brahmo Samaj to violate this clause was K. Sen himself.<sup>130</sup> Nonetheless, the ratification of the law was an important landmark on the way of reforms concerning social and day-to-day way of life and eradicating the dogmas of 'everyday Hinduism'. The reformism of the Brahmo Samajists hereafter was no longer simply a heresy, it had the approval of the authority of power and law. This was the culminating point of K. Sen's activity: gradually, his views became all the more conservative and retrograde.

Together with this, the value of the law of civil marriage was considerably reduced by the fact that Keshab Chandra openly put himself and the organization headed by him outside Hinduism. He declared that the term 'Hindus' was not applicable to Brahmoists who 'reject the authority of the Vedas, all forms of religion of *Brahmanas*, and being eclectics, recognize proselytism of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and representatives of other religious sects'. Thus, while Rammohun Roy essentially being outside Hinduism, tried in words to keep the traditional associations, and Debendranath Tagore did a great deal for virtual return of Brahmo Samajism to the bed of orthodox belief, K. Sen declared his departure from tradition, although did include (with years, ever more) elements of Hinduism in his Brahmoism. This meant not a break with national traditions but rather an expansion of the concept of 'national tradition'—from Hinduist to Indian. But the open statement on departure from Hinduism

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weakened K. Sen's influence on the Hindu section of the society.

During the period 1872-1875, conflicts grew in the Bharat-varshiya Brahmo Samaj, partly resulting from the tendency of deification of Keshab Chandra by some of his followers and the dictatorial attitudes of the leader. With a view to suppressing those having differences of opinion, he developed the absurd doctrine of '*adesh*' (voice of God), according to which God conveyed His orders, through His medium, to the rest of Brahmo Samajists. This absurd doctrine, resorted to on the smallest excuse, aroused indignation. The relations within the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj deteriorated still further—the matters came up to the extent of settlement in the court. At this time Keshab Chandra himself was suffering from a state of melancholy and tried to become a recluse. But in 1875 he received a sort of an impetus from outside, something like a fresh religious-philosophical charge. The reference here is to his familiarity with the teaching of Ramakrishna.

## INFLUENCE OF RAMAKRISHNA

This teaching will be discussed in one of the next sections; here we shall only note that the greatest influence on K. Sen was exercised by its following aspects: the idea of validity of all religions (this idea was not alien even to Keshab Chandra though he understood it somewhat differently), the perception of God in the feminine aspect (Kali), and worship of the images of God as one of the stages of religious knowledge. But the ideas of Ramakrishna were in a considerable measure reinterpreted by K. Sen in accordance with his own views already shaped, resulting in the appearance of Nava Vidhan (The Church of the New Dispensation).

The attempt to create this new world religion was preceded by a five-year period of preparation characterized by perceptible changes in the organization. The second split of the Brahmo Samaj, on the ground of K. Sen's violation of the Law of civil marriage, that is, his deviation from the principles enunciated

by his ownself, also coincided with this five-year period (more precisely, 1878).

#### CAUSES OF THE SPLIT

The causes of the splits, were, of course, far deeper than the absence of a unified view on questions of wearing the sacred thread or form of marriage ceremony. These were actuated by further polarization of views of the moderate and radical trends within the emerging bourgeois ideology. Its development, and also the continuing involvement into the sphere of reformation of new sections of petty bourgeois intelligentsia led to another split. In this, not the last role was played also by the disagreement of a great number of Brahmoists with the loyal stand of K. Sen, with his understanding of loyalty as a religious duty. This found expression in virtual deification of the colonial power<sup>131</sup> and in greater intensification of Christian elements in his teaching. In the years of conception of national self-consciousness, of the intensifying rejection of foreign yoke and adverting to national tradition, the slightly Hinduized Christianity of K. Sen could not but undermine his popularity.

Keshab Chandra's opponents tried to remove him from the organization and grab the whole property, but with the help of police he made them withdraw. On 14 May 1878 was formed the Sadharan (general) Brahmo Samaj headed by Sivanath Sastri, which has been existing to this day. K. Sen, despite the obvious facts, did not accept the split as final, asserting that any factious group was all the same a part of the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj.<sup>132</sup>

#### NEW DISPENSATION

K. Sen devoted the last years of his life to the creation of a super-national, world religion. He rejected the name 'Brahmo Samaj'<sup>133</sup> and from 1880 called his organization 'The Church of the New Dispensation' (in Bengali Nava Vidhan). In the work of this organization the eclectic mixing of various, and

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often even mutually exclusive elements, characteristic even earlier of its founder, reaches its apogee.

The ideas of Ramakrishna wonderfully understood by him intertwine with slightly reworked dogmas of Christianity, the revival of Hindu rituals is accompanied by the attempts to give them a scientific interpretation. A whole system does not thus emerge, it all breaks up into component parts. The Christian elements become gradually dominant in the teaching of K. Sen. Brahmoism (if by this be implied monotheism, rejection of idol worship, and reforms in social and day-to-day way of life) during the later period feels constrained by the system combining Christianity and traditional aspects of Hinduism (acceptance of rituals and idol worship, magic, word, *yoga*, understanding of God as of female source, offerings of flowers and fruits to the deity, religious exaltation, etc.).<sup>134</sup>

The mixing of heterogeneous components in the teaching and in the practical work of Keshab Chandra were complemented sometimes by paradoxal combination in him of bourgeois practicalism and medieval exaltedness. K. Sen organized for his followers something like a bank where they kept their savings, after which money was given to each in small portions for use for the needs of Nava Vidhan. His house was at the same time full of cranks, he himself sang and danced with them; they wrote him illiterate letters which he enthusiastically read to his friends. For a number of his works he even adopted the pseudonym '*pagal*' (mad).

Incidentally, this itself is the most characteristic feature of *Nava Vidhana*—the eclectic mixing of traditionalism and rationalism, dogmas and rituals of various religions. This artificial formation, as should of course be expected, was not vital, and soon after K. Sen's death (8 January 1884) the Church of New Dispensation practically ceased to exist.<sup>135</sup>

## SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ

The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj from the very beginning held a position close to that of the Brahmo Samaj before the

first split. Its leaders assiduously tried to avoid the extremes—did not adopt either Debendranath Tagore's conservatism with its stipulation that reforms made must invariably be gradual, or Keshab Chandra Sen's pro-Christian views and dictatorial tendencies. All the basic questions, including the theological, were decided through voting; the over-all leadership was in the hands of an elected committee comprising representatives of provincial Samajas, which had been made the branches.<sup>136</sup> The committee included about a hundred persons.<sup>137</sup> The leader of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, more consistently than other contemporary Samajists, worked for reforms in social and day-to-day way of life, particularly for the emancipation of women and their involvement in the work within the society. They actively engaged themselves in missionary work in Bengal and Assam, and gave due attention also to tribes. The religious doctrine of the Samajists reflected in a certain measure a return to Rammohun Roy's teaching, but they denied the infallibility of the Vedas and of all other sacred texts. To counteract K. Sen, adhering to cosmopolitan views, the members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj took a nationalistic stand—they introduced into the weekly divine service special prayers about 'development and liberation of their country and their people'.<sup>138</sup> All this contributed to the greater popularity of the society compared with relatively conservative Adi Brahmo Samaj and cosmopolitanism-oriented *Nava Vidhana*. However, if its work be appraised in the general Indian background, it should be admitted that, with the growth of national consciousness and appearance in the country of socio-political organizations, the role of this and other similar societies decreased considerably and by the end of the nineteenth century became quite insignificant.

According to the data of 1901 census, all the Samajas had only 4,050 members. True, during the times of Rammohun Roy, the meetings of the Brahmo Samaj were attended only by 60-70 persons, but at that stage it was explained by lack of adequate social base. The numerically lesser membership



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of the society in the end of the nineteenth century was the indicator of the fact that its historical significance was already a matter of the past.

In spite of the fact that individual Brahmoist associations continued to function later and have even been continuing till this day, the really fruitful period of the work of the Brahmo Samaj remains the one outlined above—from Rammohun Roy to the middle of the 80s of the last century (though the role of the Samaj at various stages of its history was not always the same). It should be emphasized that its leaders were the first to criticize the outlived institutions of Hinduism, and to endeavour to formulate and put in practice new bourgeois-reformist ideas dictated by the changed conditions.

### PRARTHANA SAMAJ

#### **Maharashtra**

There is not much information on the first religious-reformist societies of western India. This is explained by the secret nature of the societies themselves, one of which was even as such called 'Gupta Sabha' (secret meeting). As per fragmentary data, it was purely Hinduist and its members met periodically for worship and religious discussions. Some of them later adopted Christianity: the missionaries in Maharashtra were more active and aggressive than in Bengal.

In 1849 there appeared in Bombay another secret society 'Paramahansa Sabha' (later its members became the organizers of 'Prarthana Samaj'). Properly speaking, it was not absolutely secret, and its existence was known to many, but the nature of its work remained secret. The society was an association roughly of a thousand persons and had branches in Poona, Ahmadnagar, and other cities. The focus of attention of its leaders was on social reforms, directed above all to destroying caste restrictions. The very membership of the Paramahansa Sabha was accompanied by rituals implying conscious violation of caste restrictions: the members had to eat bread baked by a Christian and to drink water brought

by a Muslim. The meetings, taking place amidst singing of Vaishnavite Marathi hymns, concluded with a meal obligatory for all present, where the food was prepared by persons of lower castes. These rituals upset the orthodox Hindus; one of them in 1860 filtered into the society, stole the lists of its members and published them, after which the society itself disintegrated.

In 1864, Keshab Chandra Sen visited Bombay. His speeches made a great impression on the circle of intelligentsia of the city. The consequence of these speeches, though not immediate, was the establishment in 1867 of a more influential reformist society of Maharashtra—the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society). In the beginning its programme was purely social-reformist (not recognizing caste differences; the ban on child marriages; the right of the widows for remarriage; the development of women's education). The religious slant came later, but even then the main activity was the struggle for social change.

As regards the domain of religion, the Prarthana Samaj preached monotheism and practised weekly prayer meetings. But while drawing up a constitution, the organizers were guided by the tendency not to break off with Hinduism, and accordingly neither the rejection of idol worship, nor that of the rules of the caste or traditional rituals was considered essential for its members. Between the Prarthana Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj there existed close connections, strengthened after Keshab Chandra Sen's second visit and a special visit by his associate P. C. Mazoomdar, who spent six months (1872) in Bombay. There were also suggestions to unite the two societies, but the Bombay organization ultimately preferred to remain independent.

The teaching of the Prarthana Samaj can be compared with that of the Brahmo Samaj under Rammohun Roy; it was different only on two points: the members of the former did not so strongly reject idol worship (for, they saw through their fingers that many of them were performing rituals at

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home), but denied more firmly the sacredness of the ancient texts, including the Vedas.

The activity of the Prarthana Samaj was not so multisided and less radical in the field of reinterpretation of religious dogmas, but was more consistent in the sphere of carrying out social reforms. Many of its representatives later actively participated in the national liberation movement (particularly, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar), true, not within the limits of this organization.

### ARYA SAMAJ

#### **Punjab**

At a time when the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj was nearer its second split, another religious-reformist society, the Arya Samaj<sup>139</sup> was established in Punjab not without the influence of this organization but, as it were, in contrast to it. Its founder was a Gujarati sannyasi who had adopted the name of Swami Dayananda from the monastic order of Sarasvati (1824-1883). Here undoubtedly was a figure more typical for India than the refined Brahmo Samajists: in the course of twenty and odd years, he wandered in forests, lived with ascetics, was the disciple of the blind Brahmin Virajananda Sarasvati, did not receive any European education, and did not know English.

The society formed by Dayananda differed from the religious-reformist organizations of Bengal and Maharashtra in no lesser measure than Dayananda himself from K. Sen and M. G. Ranade. Despite all this, the platform of Arya Samaj recalled that of the Brahmo Samajists (monotheism; rejection of idol worship; rationalistic approach to dogmas and institutions; rejection of child marriages, etc.). This was not simply a coincidence or the effect of similar objective conditions but also the result of direct influence of Brahmo Samaj and also of Dayananda's personal contacts with K. Sen<sup>140</sup> and other prominent Brahmo Samajists. In their essentially reformist approach to Hinduism these societies were so

close that for some time the question of their merger also remained in the offing.

Dayananda on the whole repeatedly endeavoured to create a 'united front' of reformers. Thus, in 1877, he took advantage of the presence at a big *darbar* in Delhi of many eminent leaders and called upon them to unite their efforts; but this idea was not put into practice though D. Tagore, K. Sen as well as Syed Ahmed Khan had a positive response to it. In 1879 the Arya Samaj merged with the Theosophical Society; this alliance incidentally emerged rather from a misunderstanding—neither the Theosophists nor Dayananda at that stage had any understanding of each other, and six months later, they parted their ways for ever.

In the last years of his life Dayananda expressed the thought that Arya Samaj could be the organizational base for the unity of the Indians. That is just why the constitution drafted by him included only the most common points (public good; spread of knowledge; betterment of 'material, spiritual and social conditions of life of mankind'). Neither the rejection of idol worship, nor the denial of caste system, nor the anti-Muslim or anti-Christian tendencies so characteristic of the practical work of the Arya Samajists found a place there. The only dogma included in the constitution was the assertion of the infallibility of the Vedas, but that too formulated in an extremely cautious form.

The merger of Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj did not, however, take place. Swami Dayananda and his associates found totally unacceptable the virtual alienation of early Brahmoism from the national tradition and the break-off with Hinduism announced by K. Sen. The central line of thought of Arya Samajism was dictated by more distinct and more consistent nationalistic trend.

The matter of course is not of individual traits of Swami Dayananda and Keshab Chandra, but of the changed social-political conditions in the country, primarily of the growth of national self-consciousness of the Indians and the emergence

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of the liberation movement with simultaneous loss of illusions concerning the progressive role of the British rule. There was a division in the society, and, naturally, Swami Dayananda with his militant nationalism and Sen with his sermon of loyalty to the suzerain were virtually in different political camps. Whose views conformed more to the needs of the moment can be concluded from the fact that around the same time there was on the one hand the stupendous numerical growth of Arya Samaj and, on the other, a fresh split and fall in the influence of Brahmo Samaj. The influencing factor here was that Swami Dayananda's movement was a larger mass movement, expressing the interests and views of considerably broader sections of population. The territorial difference was also significant—Punjab had been annexed by the British only a quarter of a century back after long bloody battles, and the anti-British moods displayed here were more bitter than in Bengal.

### DAYANANDA'S MESSAGE

The starting-point of Swami Dayananda's message was in direct contrast to the theoretical positions of D. Tagore and K. Sen. It proceeded from the idea of infallibility of the Vedas, understanding by them only the Samhitas, and of these too, only the first three in full. In his eyes the denouncing of the Vedas was a terrible sin: 'If a person has an attitude of disrespect for the Vedas and the texts composed in conformity with them, he must be ostracized. Any one having disrespect for the Vedas is an atheist',<sup>141</sup> 'he is a heretic, and must be expelled from the nation, society, and country.'<sup>142</sup> No wonder, holding such views Swami Dayananda could not have a common language with the Brahmo Samajists.

The Vedas, wrote Dayananda, contain all wisdom and all knowledge, both already obtained as well as still latent. The fire-arms, steamers, chemical formula of water, the attainments of medicine—all these are already mentioned in the Vedas but had not so far been correctly interpreted. Besides, the

'political events of these days and what will happen in future are also described in Sanskrit works'.<sup>143</sup> Depending on how the scientific knowledge expanded and technology developed, the followers of Swami Dayananda sought in the Samhitas references to radars, television, viruses, atomic bomb, etc., and the translator of his book *Satyartha Prakash* (Light of Truth, 1874) into English, cunningly introduced, even in Swami Dayananda's (died 1883) own commentary, a reference to an aeroplane in which Rama was supposed to have brought Sita after her liberation from Ravana's captivity.

There are grounds to assume, and such suggestions had been made soon after Dayananda's death, that his somewhat extravagant position was purely a propagandist method. Like Rammohun Roy in his time, he resorted to the authority of the Vedas for giving greater weight to his views. The link with national tradition seemed to him extremely important, far more important than to any propounder of reformation.

Following the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, Dayananda Sarasvati ardently asserted the monotheistic nature of Hinduism. But they had rejected the Vedas as a source clearly polytheistic. He instead, having advanced the thesis of the infallibility of the Samhitas as the basic sources, was obliged to show that their religion was monotheistic. He declared: 'Nowhere in the four Vedas is there a mention of multitude of gods, there is rather a clear assertion that God is one.'<sup>144</sup>

All the hymns, Dayananda declared, are indeed addressed to a single God, but in each individual case He appears under new names, which personify some sort of aspect of His and have several meanings. Thus, Mitra is friend, Agni is fire, etc. What appear to be a multitude are essentially the various aspects of the one. Such names of the deities as Indra, Rudra, Brahma, such concepts as 'Prajapati', 'Prana', such words as 'pita' (father), 'mata' (mother), 'guru' (teacher) are also given corresponding interpretations; even the Buddha, in Dayananda's view, is only an epithet of the single God.

In other words, we have before us not a categorical denial

of polytheism but rather a reinterpretation of it, an attempt to present it as an outward expression of the monotheistic idea. It should be noted that such reinterpretation at various times was characteristic both of Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen but did not take such an extreme form in them. For them, the question of Vedic religion was not so urgently pressing; it was not a practical, but a purely historical one.

Firmly asserting the idea of monotheism, Swami Dayananda no less firmly rejected the dogma of *avatars* and believed that God generally is devoid of any attributes. Swami Dayananda's judgements on this subject, and the whole system of proofs, once again demonstrate that his teaching was addressed to common people and not to philosophers or theologians. 'God does not have a form. If it were not so, He would have been subject to cold, heat, thirst, hunger, disease, etc. There would have to be someone else, some creator of His nose, ears, eyes, etc. And if somebody believes that God has Himself by His will created His own body, this only corroborates our view, for in this case God must have no form at the time preceding the creation of the body.'<sup>145</sup> This resulted in the vehement rejection of the practice of idol worship. There are grounds to assume that these views of Swami Dayananda were formed under the influence of the Sthanakavasi sect, which split from the Jaina community in 1473 and whose teaching was marked by a definite anti-idol-worship trend; in any case, the town in Kathiavara where apparently the reformer was born had come under the sphere of influence of this sect.<sup>146</sup>

It is worth noting that Swami Dayananda's criticism of idol worship is quite rationalistic and rests not only on the citations from the Vedas but also on logical conclusions. Both in spirit and style, his philippics against idol worship remind us of the corresponding statements of Rammohun Roy: 'Since God does not have a form and since He is omnipresent, it is not possible to create His image. If simply the form of an idol serves to remind about God, do such creations of His as land, water, fire, air, plants and many others, representing

the excellence of the work of the Almighty, really not lead us to the same thought? Are the gigantic idols of earth and mountains, from which people carve out their small idols, really not adequate to remind you of the existence of this great artist, God ? From your side it is absolutely wrong to assert that on seeing an idol you are reminded of God. Do you mean, when there is no idol before you, you forget about God and allow theft, adultery and other wicked things ?"<sup>147</sup>

A rationalistic approach to religion is, on the whole, characteristic of Dayananda. From the positions of reason and sound sense he ridiculed the stories of miracles, devoting to this topic dozens of pages of his book *Satyartha Prakash*. He analysed all possible legends and accounts with almost atheistic irreconcilability and finds quite real explanations for each 'miracle', boldly laying bare the fraud of the priests, playing on religious feelings of the believers. This part of his book is clearly anti-clerical in character.

Like the Brahmo Samajists, Dayananda stood for reform of 'domestic (family) Hinduism'. He vehemently exposed the practice of child marriages, though on this question he was less consistent than the Brahmo Samajists. He allowed remarriage only for those widows who had still not entered into actual conjugal relations. In all other cases he suggested the ancient system of levirate marriage (*niyoga*), which brought attacks on him from the side of other reformers as well as Christian missionaries. Incidentally, this system did not find wide acceptance in Arya Samaj itself.

#### CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The chapters devoted to critical analysis of Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism form a major part of the *Satyartha Prakash*, the Bible of the Arya Samajists. The tone and methods of Dayananda were quite unusual for India. His task consisted in laying bare the absurdity of other religions, of their dogmas and practices. Behind all this is the glorification of Hinduism supposedly free from those inadequacies



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which he so scathingly exposes. It is specially necessary to note here the expressed anti-Muslim tendency of these chapters which also was something new for India. Later, anti-Islamism became one of the most typical features of Arya Samaj, though in Dayananda, this tendency was only secondary in relation to the glorification of Hinduism and rejection of Christianity. He criticized Christianity from a vantage point, as the missionaries had for many years been criticizing Hinduism. He stressed the errors, irrationalities, contradictions of the Christian dogma, blamed Christ for cruelty, heartlessness, cunningness, amorality and essentially threw a bridge between him and his followers: 'What sort of people are these Christians if they believe in God doing such actions and still expect salvation from Him ?'<sup>148</sup> In other words, the chapters on Christianity are a political pamphlet of its own kind, addressed against the British.

Swami Dayananda did not restrict himself to volleys of words to the followers of other religions. In the practices of Arya Samaj he introduced and conducted on a broad mass scale the ceremony of *shuddhi* (purification), that is, of return to the lap of Hinduism of those who sometimes became converts to Islam or Christianity (usually, people from lower castes).

The ceremony of *shuddhi* was used by the Arya Samajists for giving their movement a pressing and even aggressive character, not inherent in Hinduism in the past. Their proselytizing activity, aimed at converting to Hinduism those who earlier were not Hindus also began to be formulated on the basis of *shuddhi*. Hinduism was regarded as a national platform at which the unification of Indians was possible.

The members of the Arya Samaj resorted to totally new methods, while trying to realize the views of their leaders. Thus, they allowed the untouchables to wear the sacred cord, which undoubtedly gave a greater effect than the refusal of the members of higher castes to carry the cord. This not only removed the caste barriers but opened one more opportunity for attracting new members and expanding the organization.

The Arya Samaj nationalism from the very beginning acquired a purely Hinduist tinge; this was not Indian but 'Hinduist nationalism'. The activity of the Arya Samajists, their proselytism, aroused the hostility and suspicion of colonial powers, and worsened their relations with the representatives of a number of religious communities, above all Muslims and Sikhs.

A total of eight years elapsed from the establishment of the society in 1875 up to the mysterious death of its founder on 18 October 1883 (it is suspected that he was poisoned). During this time it acquired a great popularity in North-Western India, although after Dayananda's death there emerged in it two groups, the differences<sup>149</sup> amongst whom led to the split of 1892. In any case, both the groups continued the work started by Swami Dayananda. Both the groups preached monotheism (with stress on the Vedas), proselytism, enlightenment, and nationalism. The militant character of the organization was expressed in the sanghatan movement, turning the defence of Hinduism from attacks by the followers of other dogmas, specially Islam and Christianity, into a religious duty. This impending movement often led to sharp and at times tragic conflicts. It is interesting that at the time of such conflicts the Arya Samajists united their efforts, and made the inner differences recede to the background.

Numerically, the organization continued to grow. As per data of the 1901 census, there were over 92,000 persons in it. It exists even today but does not play such a perceptible role in the social and religious life of the country.

#### NEO-HINDUISM OF RAMAKRISHNA

If the attitude of the Brahmo Samajists to Hinduism be regarded as a thesis and Swami Dayananda's teaching as antithesis, the religious-reformist teaching of Ramakrishna will appear to us a synthesis of its own kind. Brahmo Samajism existed practically on the periphery of Hinduism, Arya Samajism was more or less in open contrast to the 'Brahmo

Samaj' doctrines, and both these organizations evoked sharply negative reaction of the orthodox. In the teaching of Ramakrishna, in the form in which it has come to us, all these doctrines seem to have been reduced to a common denominator.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886),<sup>150</sup> the priest of the Kali temple in Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, uneducated, almost an illiterate person, never founded any reformist society nor joined the already existing ones. During his lifetime he was almost unknown beyond the narrow circle of his followers. Fame came to him later, largely as a result of the activity of the closest of his disciples, Swami Vivekananda. The life of Ramakrishna, with his trances, self-meditation, yogic attempts to know and vision of God is outwardly little different from that of any Indian mystic of the medieval period. This is all the more striking because the problems of bourgeois-reformist character found in his teaching original refraction and solution.

Ramakrishna's contribution to reformation of Hinduism lies above all in his conception of stages. As a contrast to Brahmo Samajists and Arya Samajists, instead of rejecting some dogmas of religion and completely reinterpreting others, he strove to reconcile all, even the mutually exclusive ones. A definite circle of problems, positions, cults were accepted by him as the first stage of the 'knowledge' of God, essential and the only one possible for people at the lower step of development. The same ideas, but in a different garb, more specific, conformed, in his scheme, to the aspirations of the people of developed intellect. In the most abstract and inferential form these very spiritual values appeared before the people who were at the top of intellectual ladder. In other words, the complex of ideas remained the same in all cases, it was only the forms of their comprehension that changed: transferred, as it were, from one plane to parallel ones. This removed their contradictoriness, making them equally true—each, at its stage.

At the lowest step, in Ramakrishna's view, is noted a

scrupulous observance of rites, idol worship, sacrificial offering, endowing of God with anthropomorphous features, that is, of those aspects of Hinduism which were the object of criticism by the members of reformist societies. Turning to Brahmo Samajists, he said : 'We cannot tell people that they are acting wrongly, while worshipping the images of clay. It is not for us to teach others. Only God can teach people. The image of clay is an image of the spirit. But even if it be admitted that this is really clay, the various forms of worship to deity are all the same prompted by God Himself, for satisfying the people standing at various steps of knowledge'.

The understanding of God by the believers as the Absolute, having no form, no attributes, testifies to the highest step of spiritual development : 'First you see the goddess with ten hands—in this form she strikes by her might, later—the deity with two hands (the ten hands with various implements and weapons are no longer there), then Gopal, the tender child in whom there is not even a trace of might, and finally—only light'.<sup>151</sup>

Ramakrishna applied his method of stages also to the three schools of Vedanta, declaring that these too are not contradictory to each other and are in one row on the ascending line : *dvaita* corresponds to the lowest step of attainment; *vishishtadvaita* to the middle; and the *advaita* Vedanta, which can be understood only in a state of *samadhi*, is the highest revelation.

The same very method forms the basis of the synthetic approach developed by Ramakrishna to Hinduism on the whole, which turned this amorphous and contradictory religion into a relatively well-established systematized belief. All its aspects have equal rights, like various forms of worship to a single God, refracted differently in the religious practices of various peoples. The preacher himself, speaking of God, often used the words 'Brahman' and 'Kali' without in any way juxtaposing these. For him both the abstract 'Brahman' and personified 'Kali' were the same: 'Kali is the first created Energy; when She is not active, I call Her 'Brahman,' when

She creates, preserves or destroys, I call Her 'Shakti,' or 'Kali'. What you call Brahman, I call Kali. They are inseparable, like fire and its capacity to burn. Thinking of the one, you necessarily think of the other. He who accepts Kali, must also accept Brahman, and vice versa—Brahman and His power are identical. What I address to as Shakti or Kali is Brahman'.<sup>152</sup>

Although the Hindu polytheism was not denied in this teaching (having occupied a place at the lowest stage of cognition of God), Ramakrishna's sermon on the whole had a clearly expressed monotheistic character. As if developing the position of the *Rig-Veda*—'Truth is one, but the wise call it differently'—he asserted that God is one although the believers call Him by different names, imagine Him in various forms, ascribe to Him various attributes, and illustrated his thought by numerous fables and maxims.<sup>153</sup> Just as water, which is taken from the tank by the Hindus, Muslims and Christians, calling it '*jal*', '*pani*', '*water*', is the first and also second, and also the third, and cannot be considered, say, exclusively '*pani*', or '*jal*', in the same way God is worshipped by some as Allah, by others as Rama, by still others as Brahman but in reality He is one (No. 2). As things made of gold have all possible forms and names, but do remain gold at the same time, in the same way God takes many forms and names (No. 7); the followers of various religions portray God differently, but this is because He looks different to them, like the man who takes as the members of the family the father, the son, husband, brother (No. 8); man knows God in that form and by that name by which he worships Him (No. 4); meaningless are the arguments as to what form and what name of God are true, like the arguments of the blind men as to what an elephant is like when one touched its tail, the second the ear, the third the feet, and the fourth the stomach (No. 5).

Having arranged according to the stages various tendencies in Hinduism, including the conflicting ones, Ramakrishna took another important step—he declared all religions of the world not contradictory to each other but equally true and

valid. This aspect of his teaching, as already stated, exercised a great deal of influence on Keshab Chandra Sen, and later on the formation of Swami Vivekananda's outlook.

#### ANTI-SECTARIANISM OF RAMAKRISHNA

The anti-sectarianism of Ramakrishna differs radically from the position, say, of Rammohun Roy on this question, but logically leads to the same result: accepting all sects and all religions equally true, he thereby divests each of them of the possibility of occupying a dominant position. The tendency to unite the country by equating the rights of all its religions is also here objectively reflected.

There is in Ramakrishna's teaching an attempt to resolve distinctively the internal contradictions of Hinduism, as well as the contradictions between Hinduism and other religions, above all, Islam and Christianity. And the reformist currents in Hinduism—however far these may not have gone from orthodox views—are regarded as having equal rights. But it must be noted that some key positions of the dominant religion were taken by him rather critically, his attitude being not always expressed quite definitely. He preferred to circumvent the sharp corners, stressing some one aspect of his teaching and thereby deliberately leaving the others in shadow. Essentially critically, he perceived the 'law' of Karma, the dogma of transmigration of souls, the authority of the sacred texts, the caste system. The idea of salvation by faith was suggested as a panacea for all temptations and troubles. Just with this is associated his notion of atonement for sins—it is enough to pronounce the name of the deity only once to atone for even such a sin as the killing of a Brahmin or a sacred cow. Objectively, the position about salvation by faith meant denying the whole complex system of injunctions in Hinduism.

The thought of reality of the surrounding world is a substantial part of Ramakrishna's message. It automatically came to the conclusion of desirability and need of active work, a conclusion soon energetically grasped by Swami Vivekananda.

A denial of the temptations of day-to-day life which, put differently, were denoted by the words 'kamini and kanchan' (that is, women and gold) was regarded as an invariable condition of spiritual enlightenment. True, here Ramakrishna allowed definite compromise : 'It is not possible to achieve this at once, it has to be practised daily. In the beginning a man must refuse women and gold, at least mentally. Then already by the will of God, he will refuse both mentally and actually. One cannot demand from the residents of Calcutta that they renounce everything in the name of God. They have to be told that they should renounce inwardly'.<sup>151</sup>

One should work for others, and such work should be done for promoting one's selflessness and not for the sake of one's own salvation, not even for the sake of those for whom it is done, but exclusively out of love for God. Objectively, working for others, a man creates good for himself, although it is God and not people who helps them. 'The work for others, when a man is simply an instrument in divine hands, generates in his soul a love for God. It is therefore important that nobody should expect a reward for his good deeds. Always try to do your duties without wishing for any favours',<sup>152</sup> he said. It is necessary only to know God, to understand that everything takes place according to His will. Does this imply that, before knowledge, it is necessary to refuse social work ? 'Not at all ! It is necessary to continue this work but one must pronounce the praise of God every day'.<sup>153</sup>

Such type of message is hardly the most wonderful part of Ramakrishna's teaching. The preacher expounded it in the form of sermons. It was not systematized either by him or by his followers who later, after the death of the teacher, published their daily notes—the only source, making it possible for us to judge his views. The sayings of this priest of the Kali temple were in every case directed to quite a specific person, a concrete talker—a fact which could not but find reflection in the form of these sayings.

In conclusion, it should be said that Ramakrishna rises

before us as a mythical, supernatural figure in whom a number of his disciples were inclined to see even an *avatara* (incarnation) of Vishnu. The image of the real man, actually living and preaching in Calcutta a hundred years back, was turned into that of a legendary figure with remarkable alacrity.

A historian of this period has essentially to encounter two legends about Ramakrishna—one purely traditional; and the other bourgeois-reformist, but both conceal the personality of the Calcutta priest. The one legend consists in piling up miracles, fables, and tales, and pertains to the genre of religious myth creation; the other put into circulation by Swami Vivekananda and developed till this day (particularly, by representatives of Ramakrishna Mission) is reduced to a short exposition of his teaching in the form in which it is given above. It is just in this form that it was needed by the leaders of reformation at the later stage of its development; it did just in this form give them the basis for doing away with the isolation of reformers of various trends, for involving both the reformers and the orthodox simultaneously in ideas of nationalism, for involving religion on the whole for the awakening of the masses in their fight against colonial regime. Here it was possible neither to reject the ideas of reformism, nor also to demand from the masses an invariable departure from traditional notions.

The second legend about Ramakrishna differs from the first in that its creation was determined by political and not religious considerations. Of course, the elements of Ramakrishna's teaching examined here were not conceived by Swami Vivekananda or other disciples. But these were partly pushed into the background by the cult of female source, systematic idol worship, observance of rituals, all characteristic of Ramakrishna—he was not satisfied by the existent rites and himself conceived new ones, which he performed before the statue of Kali. All this was, later on (literally, a few years after his death), found demolished. From complex and contradictory, the teaching of Ramakrishna was turned into a



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well-established, inwardly logical system which reflected the need of consolidation of all sects and interpretations of Hinduism from the positions of the new stage of development of bourgeois ideology.

### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRST STAGE OF REFORMATION

It is, we believe, expedient to conclude this brief exposition of the views of some eminent leaders of reformation at its first stage and of the heads of main religious-reformist societies by examining reformation *as a process* with its laws and specific features.

Incidentally, a number of bourgeois scholars, as already noted, have in mind not reformation but 'restoration' of Hinduism, its 'renaissance'. Some of them take this word in its literal meaning, implying the revival of traditions lost behind the antiquity of time. They usually refer to the fact that the teachings of the pioneers of two most important movements in nineteenth century Hinduism—Brahmo Samajism and Arya Samajism—were carried on under the banner of 'purification of the faith of the ancestors'. What exactly lay behind this slogan has already been stated above.

The mutual relationship of ancient traditions and reformation was reciprocal in the sense in which the reformists, wishing to strengthen their positions and to give them weight, themselves tried to present it. It was not the discovery in the past of any forgotten dogmas and positions that activated their teachings. The creators of these teachings consciously sought in the past a support for their far from traditional views, which were a reflection of the changed social-political conditions. The resort to ancient works was characteristic both of Rammohun Roy and of Debendranath Tagore and also of Dayananda Sarasvati. Each of them shaped a complex of religious-philosophical views—essentially bourgeois-reformist. And under the slogan of 'purification of the original faith' these views were more or less convincingly linked with tradi-

tion by identifying certain texts as the starting-point for some main tendency of development of Hinduism while ignoring and bypassing the other tendencies.

And two curious peculiarities come to the fore here. Various reformers found in the past various points of support. Thus, in their objectives to strengthen their views, R. Roy rested on Upanishads, Dayananda Sarasvati on Samhitas, K. C. Sen on Puranas, and later on epical tradition. But despite various points of support, the over-all complex of new, bourgeois-reformist notions was nearly the same for all leaders of reformation, irrespective of what texts or traditions they depended upon for illustrating and establishing their views.

What exactly constituted the content of this complex ? In the period under study the accent was on conceptual changes in the religious doctrine. All reformists of the first stage, without exception, preached monotheism and rejection (or reinterpretation) of Hinduist polytheism. The place of numerous gods and goddesses, of the divine triad, of a personal god is held by the indescribable and unattainable Absolute, void of any anthropomorphous features.

This position can be regarded as the central—and not only because it was put forward by all reformists (even when the understanding of God as the Absolute was confused with the traditional, since it did not, as will be shown later, lose its specific character), but also because it became the starting-point for almost all aspects of reformation. Here, the ‘indescribability’ of the Absolute served as a definite prerequisite of struggle against idol worship, and its ‘unattainability’ reduced the objective of ‘knowledge of God’ to the task of secondary importance and was an essential premise for the theses of ‘inner worship of God’ and ‘work for the world’. The reinterpretation of the idea of God at the religious-philosophical level signified also the attempt to discard primitive pantheism which, speaking in the words of Karl Marx, leads to the fact that ‘man, this master of nature, blissfully falls on his knees before the monkey Hanuman and the cow Sabala’.<sup>157</sup>

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Of course, the idea of the Impersonal Absolute was not introduced for the first time into Hinduism by R. Roy or his followers. But its acceptance as the *only* interpretation of God was remarkable and had its reasons. The teaching of monotheism and understanding of God as Absolute reflected the aspiration for liquidation of contradictions between the followers of numerous sects and currents of the dominant religion. The tendency itself is however an evidence of origin of a sense of national community. Along with this, the anti-sectarian idea of Impersonal Absolute peculiarly refracted the anti-feudal, bourgeois ideas of equality: the elimination of complex heavenly hierarchy was a 'fantastic reflection in the heads of people' of the need felt by them for the elimination of the earthly hierarchy.

### RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

The concept of 'religious authority' was also re-examined. Essentially, a step was taken to the side of liberation of reason from medieval scholastics. Particularly important in this background is the rejection of the dogma of infallibility of the Vedas. These sacred books may not have been replaced by the reformist systems, but with compilations from the Hindu texts (Debendranath Tagore) or compilations from the texts of other religions (K. C. Sen), the authority of the 'God-inspired word' and 'sacred writ' was seriously shaken. Even a formal return to Vedas by Dayananda Sarasvati did not at all mean a break with reason as the highest criterion. On the contrary, in the general context of his teaching, reason in no way played a lesser role than in the teaching, say, of D. Tagore. The reformists tried to contrast the revelation from above to sound sense; of intuition, and blind faith to faith through logical judgement. The ancient texts of Hinduism, not formally constituting a canon but possessing great sanctity in the eyes of the orthodox Hindus (a considerable part of the population, we know, was forbidden to read and listen to them), were the object of correction and reinterpretation.

The same fate was met with also by the authority of custom. The rules which, within the limits of traditional teaching, had to be accepted even in the course of centuries, and were actually accepted by the Hindus as sacrosanct were subjected to sharp criticism. In its inner logic, this carried in embryo the admissibility of a critical attitude not only to individual dogmas but also to religion in general. This admissibility became real in India far later, only in the twentieth century, but its premises are discerned even in the deistic teaching of Rammohun Roy.

#### DENIAL OF MEDIATION

One of the most important features of Hinduist reformation was the denial of all kind of mediation between the individual believer and the object of his faith, between man and God. It was the result of development of a whole complex of anti-feudal ideas. Since the reformers allowed themselves to doubt the infallibility of religious texts, to dispute the indisputability and accuracy of traditional precepts and, lastly, to treat the idea of God in a new way, it is natural that they thereby placed under attack the authority of the Brahmins as preservers and interpreters of 'scripture', as custodians of tradition, as members of the caste of priests, as servants of God. The struggle against their exclusive position was at the same time a part of the struggle against class-caste prejudices, which, in its turn, was most closely associated with the idea of equality of people before God. Besides, it implied a protest against the hereditary monopoly of knowledge and generally against the feudal 'right of birth'.<sup>158</sup> The function of mediation, according to the views of the reformists, was performed by the Brahmins (although in the activity of the domestic clergy and priests in sacred places it was the most obvious), and besides, also by temples and images of gods in them and in domestic altars. It is natural that, while opposing this function, by contrasting to it the inner religiosity of the individual, the reformers fought also against the Brahmin class, against temple Hinduism

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and idol worship. The non-acceptance of temple Hinduism (that is, of the Brahmin class as the feudal owner) sounded in their sermons considerably more faintly than the rejection of idol worship and priestly duties of Brahmins. In this faintness was manifest the top clique of religious reformation in India and the fact that the originating bourgeois elements whose views it reflected were partly still closely linked with feudal agriculture. It should be stressed that in denying the institution of mediators between God and the people the reformists came in absolute conflict with the concept (taking shape) of mutual relationship between the believer and the deity, with the practices formed: neither the performance—of rites nor the offering of sacrifices was possible in the orthodox Hindu method without the help of a professional priest. In this aspect their teaching was cardinally different from the traditional one—the religion became the personal affair of an individual and all people were equal in their rights for the ‘contact’ with God. The bourgeois individualism and bourgeois notion of equality of possibilities formed the basis of rejection of mediators.

### EXTERNAL METHODS OF INFLUENCE

Discarded or re-examined at the same time were also the external methods of influence of the believer on the object of faith. The performance of rituals, the offering of sacrifices, the carrying out of pilgrimage, etc. became the subject of criticism. Offered instead were inner methods of influence, including those well known to Hinduism, like self-perfection (occupying a central place in the teaching of the reformers), meditation (playing, incidentally, a considerably lesser role in their doctrine than in the Hinduism of the preceding period), and those partly borrowed from Christianity (prayers, particularly group prayers). This was the process of gradual substitution of religious rites of individual inner faith, of primitive religion, and of sacrificers, by precise religiosity of ‘householders turned into popes’ (K. Marx). Behind the rejection of sacrifices, pilgrimage, frequently ruinous ceremonies, lay also the idea

of the need for simplifying the ceremony of performance of cult (a peculiar analogy of the demand for 'cheap church' in Europe).

#### STRESS ON ETHICS

A conscious transformation of the concept of belief was accompanied by the stress on the ethical source in religion as an important one, and also a change in its normative-appraising aspect. Morality was here brought to the foreground, and endowed with a timeless character. There came a change first of all in the criteria of assessments (reason or intuition is contrasted to blind pursuit of dogma or custom), which means, the assessments themselves. What was recognized moral in the preceding historical period, and was, as such, ascribed to tradition, is declared sinful now in the period of growth of bourgeois relations. Such a statement of the question was in itself new for Hinduism. The veil of sacredness is lifted from the outlived customs. We shall recall, for instance, the campaign for the ban on 'sati'. There were also other fresh reassessments more important in the conceptual sense. Thus, compared with asceticism, renunciation of worldly affairs, earlier considered one of the highest virtues, preference is given to active work.

Before us essentially is a social reformation, but the criticism made is from the standpoint of retention of religious outlook on the whole, on the basis of religious premises, and with the help of religious conclusions and proofs, which allows even this criticism to be included in the concept of reformation of religion.

Proceeding from their understanding of religious morality, the reformists gradually but persistently narrowed down the area of taboos in Hinduism, which, as is known, most rigidly regulated each step of the individual from birth to death, all his life as a member of the society and the family. They were opposed to these bans which were humiliating to man (relating to the method of food, to the notion of ritual profanation), and led to the isolation of the Indians from the other

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peoples (the ban on travelling across the sea). Since the regulations touched family and marriage relations, they put forward demands for raising the minimum age for marriage, for permitting the widows to marry again, for marriages between peoples of various castes, and for abolition of child marriage.

### FIGHT AGAINST TABOOS

The fight against the system of innumerable taboos had a vast significance, more so because in this struggle the reformists did not limit themselves only to polemics, they violated these taboos in practice.

Another aspect of the process of narrowing down of the sphere of taboos was the expansion of the idea of equality. Its slow but definite solution, in its turn, responded to a more or less conscious urge for essentially bourgeois transformation of social relations. It is just to this aspect of the teaching of the reformers that the greatest and not always favourable attention of their contemporaries was drawn. The changes consisted mainly in the removal of medieval barriers, primarily those of caste and position. The approach to the problem was based first on the position of equality of all peoples before God (R. Roy and D. Tagore), and later on assertion of equality of peoples amongst themselves (K. Sen).<sup>159</sup>

The new concept of the idea of equality was also expressed in religious universalism characteristic of the majority of reformers, although the content of the last concept changed at various stages of the process. We shall return to a detailed examination of its evolution later.

One important philosophical conclusion of the reformists was the acceptance of the reality of the world. With this was associated a definite reinterpretation of Vedanta, a deviation from the position of illusoriness of the world which served as one of the justifications of the sermon of active work. Viewed in the proper perspective, it led on the one hand to liberation of Indian philosophy from the fetters of religion and mysticism,

and on the other to reorientation of religion towards 'earthly' problems.

Thus, briefly speaking, the new conceptual positions in the teachings of all reformists, irrespective of what each of them chose in the traditional Hinduism as the point of support, can possibly be reduced to the following: (1) reinterpretation of the idea of God; (2) re-examination of the content of the concept 'religious authority'; (3) rejection of the need of mediation between God and the people; (4) replacement of external methods of influence on the objects of belief by the internal; (5) stressing of ethical source in religion; (6) narrowing down of the area of taboos; and (7) rejection of the thesis of illusoriness of the world. This circle, essentially, of bourgeois notions was the same common one which was, in a more or less veiled form, the basis of reformist teachings of the nineteenth century when the dominating line was of confessional changes.

The bourgeois character of the positions outlined above is manifest first of all in their anti-feudal trend. The traditional dogmas and customs were criticized, the caste and position barriers were removed, and attempts were made to re-examine the medieval outlook on the whole (the reality of the surrounding world, the place of man in it, the role of reason and knowledge, the concept of religious belief, etc.) and to digress from mythological thought. And although the most important feature of medieval outlook—religiosity—was retained, it also suffered definite changes in favour of abstract 'spirituality'.

#### RELIGION AND NEW SOCIAL RELATIONS

Further, the attempts to adapt religion to new social relations and economic conditions were made from rationalistic positions and rested, as a rule, on acceptance of reason and sound sense as the highest criterion, but the declared rationale was what in the ultimate count conformed to the emerging bourgeois notions. In other words, the 'rationality', and this means the acceptability of specific positions of Hinduism, or 'irrationality' which meant their outdatedness and unaccepta-



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bility, was determined by their conformity or non-conformity as the case may be, to the newly perceived role of the individual in the modified system of social relations, to the reinterpreted understanding of the world and the reality, of the correlation of belief and knowledge, etc.

The problem of emancipation of human reason was raised and solved not simply at the purely theoretical level: great attention was paid to the reform of the operating system of education, to its liberation from medieval scholastics. Lastly, reformation at its first stage did not lead to modernization of Hinduism and included the specific religious form of propaganda of idealized bourgeois relations and social changes. This propaganda up to some point of time was fed with illusions of the British rule being a blessing for India.

The characteristics of reformation of Hinduism mentioned here can be called those of enlightenment. It is known that there was a gap of several centuries between the periods of Reformation and Enlightenment in Europe; in India, however, as E. N. Komarov and L. R. Gordon-Polonskaya believe, for a number of historical reasons, the ideas of enlightenment practically coincided and intertwined with the ideas of bourgeois reformation of religion.<sup>160</sup> The same thinkers can partly be regarded both as religious reformers and enlighteners. It is remarkable that the latter, viz. the enlighteners, except as a very rare exception (H. Derozio and 'young Bengalis'), did not change over to positions of atheism; the ideas of enlightenment were propagated largely through religion. This was explained at that stage by the weakness and small numerical strength of bourgeois elements, by their close association with precapitalist mode of production, and also by absolute dominance in other social strata of the medieval, that is, religious outlook.

At the next stage of reformation the tendencies of enlightenment recede to the background—time brought forward new tasks,—but do not disappear without a trace; these are, in some measure or the other, characteristic both of Swami

Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghosh, and specially M. K. Gandhi.

### SUMMARY

Summing up what has been said above, it may be stated that, at the first stage of reformation in Hinduism, there shaped a circle of notions, which were a peculiar refraction of the ideas of enlightenment borne by a numerically still very small but historically perspective and progressive strata of the emerging bourgeoisie. This circle of notions in its pure form constituted a bourgeois complex. What elements it was composed of, has been shown by us above in general outline. The various time plasts, including also primitive beliefs, were intertwined in a complex and contradictory way in the traditional complex coexisting together with the bourgeois complex.

In their content, these complexes were a contrast. The most important problems of world outlook within their limits as posed and solved were absolutely different. Thus, there sharply differed the perception of the surrounding world (according to orthodox views, unreal, being an inexplicable 'play of God', an illusion); the understanding of essence and role of the individual and the meaning of human life (according to tradition it is a rung in the chain of rebirths, man passes through four stages of life, gradually rejecting active work, and each step of his is regulated by rules of his caste and predetermined by the immutable 'law' of Karma, which even the gods are subject to); the concept of religious belief; the idea of God and the practice of worshipping Him.

### BOURGEOIS AND TRADITIONAL COMPLEXES

The reformist notion of religion (inner individual religiosity; monotheism; the most simplified cult; rationalistic approach to dogmas and directions) was essentially also a contrast to the Vedic notion (the vast pantheon of gods, subjected, through the essential media, to aim-oriented effect from the side of the believer who expects the satiation of his needs).

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The bourgeois and traditional complexes did not coincide even in structure. The latter included three parts—mythology, philosophy, and the sphere of social, day-to-day way of life, each of which had a corresponding, definite type of cult (religious deviations proper): mythology—the temple ritual (essentially with the help of the priest); philosophy—meditation, *yoga*, etc.; the sphere of day-to-day life—domestic ritual and caste ceremonies. In the very first complex mythology and temple ritual were simply discarded; this, so important a part of mass religion at that stage was not found necessary by the emerging bourgeoisie. The Hinduism of the day-to-day way of life and the domestic ritual were initially also almost fully rejected, but this aroused such strong resistance from the orthodoxy that reformation could only partly defend its stand here. It achieved maximum success in the field which it had made its main concern—in philosophy and the inner cult, that is, in the most elitist sphere of religion. It was in this that considerable conceptual re-assessment took place. The cardinal specific elements of Hinduism, particularly the dogma of transmigration of souls, the ideas of incarnation of God and liberation from the cycle of rebirths, lost their significance within the bourgeois complex, and were relegated to the background or were completely rejected.

It is necessary, however, to bear in mind, that in the religious system on the whole, the traditional complex occupied an absolutely dominant position; the reformist discontent of extremely few sections of intelligentsia and petty bourgeois strata was a singularly urban phenomenon (characteristic only for a few large cities) and exercised no influence on the life and views of a great majority of believers. Besides, with all the differences in the content and structure of both the complexes, the boundary line between them, in practice, was partly extremely thin. The elements of either this or that were, as a rule, present in the views of the same thinkers.

The most important corrective in all that has been said here is as follows. The bourgeois reformation of Hinduism

considered so far was a static one. A study of it in its dynamics, however, leads to unexpected observations. It did not by any means develop along a straight line. The circle of bourgeois notions outlined above, which, as stated, was characteristic of all its leaders, found distinct expression only in Rammohun Roy's teaching, which marked the very first phase of the process. Turning, however, to the views of the reformists of the middle and second half of the nineteenth century, it is found that many aspects of Hinduism sharply criticized and rejected in his time by R. Roy (anthropomorphousness of God, polytheism, idol worship, etc.), were, as it were, restored in their status.

Debendranath Tagore who, in the early period of his activity, denied the infallibility of the Vedas and the Upanishads, later created a special Brahmo Samajist ritual for all occasions of life, only by changing a little the form of ancient customs and ceremonies. Keshav Chandra Sen deviates still further from R. Roy's 'protestant' teaching, reviving the popular religious processes and, later, even idol worship, the ceremonies of offering flowers and fruits to the statues of the deities. Still closer to traditional Hinduism apparently is the teaching of Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, who included in a chapter of his code the thesis of infallibility of the Vedas. And lastly, the sermons of Ramakrishna Paramahansa have side by side the understanding of God as Impersonal, Absolute and as Kali, the many-armed terror-striking goddess.

#### OUTER FORM OF REFORMATION

But the scheme suggested shows only the outer form of reformation. What looked like a deviation was, in fact, a gradual assertion of reformist views in Hinduism. We feel, this process was only superficially perceived as deviating from R. Roy's reformist teaching to traditional Hinduism; objectively, however, it implied the fixing and developing of the views of R. Roy. And reformist position was a contraposition in respect of traditional Hinduism. In the course of reforma-

tion, the followers of R. Roy returned from such contraposition to the orthodox thesis, but interpreted it in such a way that, while remaining orthodox in its form, it also at the same time acquired an innovatory essence.<sup>161</sup> In other words, in the sermons of R. Roy's followers, his teaching at times assumed the usual form, mimicked, but inwardly continuing to be reformist. The same circle of views that was distinctly expressed only in Rammohun, existed also in other similar teachings but already in a different garb. The deviations of later reformists were not a deviation in principle: what was rejected by R. Roy was revived by them not in traditional but in a reinterpreted form.<sup>162</sup>

We shall take up a few examples. The central conceptual idea of religion, viz. the idea of God in R. Roy's works has a 'chemically pure' monotheistic content; besides, no other interpretations of the absolute are accepted. In Dayananda Sarasvati's book, however, God appears supposedly in the form which is also there in traditional Hinduism, but the monotheistic understanding of the idea is retained in untouchability. A more particular example is that Rammohun Roy decisively rejects the very idea of pilgrimage, but Keshav Chandra Sen seems to revert to it, though the meaning given by him to this custom (inner concentration on the teachings of the sages and prophets) virtually allows such a reversion to be equated with rejection: the traditional pilgrimage has remained only in name. It is interesting that sometimes the interpretation leads to complete insipidity of theological significance of the concrete concept. Thus, Swami Dayananda interpreted the ritual of burning oil as the ritual of purifying air, and Keshav Chandra Sen saw in the doctrine of *avatars* symbolic exposition of the theory of evolution (the deviation from mythological thinking is particularly clear and obvious here).

However, it would be a simplification of matters to present the process of reformation exclusively as a movement supposedly going backwards to tradition. First, its various leaders,

along with the outward deviation from R. Roy's doctrine, retained many elements of this doctrine in their purely reformist (reinterpreted) form. While Dayananda, say, in his understanding of the idea of God, supposedly stepped towards the traditional notion, he held fully R. Roy's positions in the matter of idol worship.

Secondly, the later reformists sometimes adhered generally to traditional notions, that is, deviated from R. Roy's doctrine not only outwardly but also inwardly—for instance, K. Sen in the matter of magic of word (and in the later period of his life, also in many others).

Thirdly, simultaneously with the movement of reformation backwards, to the opposite side, there continued its further development along the path shown by R. Roy—Tagore's denial of divine inspiration of the Vedas;<sup>163</sup> rejection of caste system as an essential condition of membership of Brahmo Samaj; wearing of the sacred cord by the Sudras; the campaign for permission to widow remarriage and inter-caste marriages, etc.<sup>164</sup>

How is such a complex course of reformation explained? R. Roy's doctrine in which the reformist approach to religion found its concentrated expression was too much of a sharp turn from tradition. It was partly determined by the influence on the formation of his views of bourgeois European thought. The reformation, of course, was the consequence of economic, social, and ideological shifts above all in India herself, but in the early nineteenth century the bourgeois elements here had only just originated and the influence of the western ideas was, naturally, great. This led to the well-known isolation of the earliest reformers of Hinduism from their environment—the being still essentially medieval in character came in contradiction with consciousness, indirectly reflecting the reality of advanced industrial countries.

The ideas of enlightenment nearer in time, and the ideas of Christianity already reformed a long time back, did not, we repeat, condition the reformation of Hinduism, did not

condition also its outward expression, 'hinted' already by the medieval heresies, but these did cause the alienation of bourgeois complex in its 'pure' form from mass religious consciousness and from the opportunities for the lay believers to perceive the content of the given complex. This was one of the reasons of the elitist character of reformation of Hinduism.

Between Rammohun Roy's teaching and orthodox Hinduism there was a big gap, difficult to be bridged. The same can also be said of the Brahmo Samaj of the earlier period, because it, in the words of E. V. Pavskaya, 'characterizes rather Roy's activity and views and not the social or even religious life of that period. The society established by Roy lived on his energy, took up his views, and subsisted on him'.<sup>165</sup>

Hypothetically, it may be imagined that reformation, inevitable at some stage of ideological evolution, could have started developing along the growing and not towards the reverse side. Then it certainly would have turned into a new sect on the periphery of Hinduism or instead, overstepping its limits, into a new religion, only indirectly linked with Hinduism. And though the embryos of such a movement were there (the Brahmo Samaj essentially became a sect, and K. Sen's church overstepped Hinduism), the process, on the whole, as we have tried to show, proceeded along another path—complex, contradictory, with digressions backwards.

In the ultimate count this was explained by the fact that reformation took place in a country which was under colonial dependence. In these conditions it was natural that Hinduism was perceived as a national tradition. Such an identification was made easy by its characteristics (not only as religion, but also as 'religious-social organization of a great majority of population') and was a reaction to the wounding of national dignity of Indians by the British.

The earliest speeches and actions against spiritual colonization echoed when liberal illusions in respect of British power had almost invariably come to the fore. 'It was just in the sphere of spiritual life', writes E. N. Komarov, 'that the

tendency towards national independence, conceived in the midst of the emerging bourgeoisie, started taking shape, and clashed in the first instance against the policy of spiritual enslavement, which was followed by the colonial powers. Therefore, the bourgeois-national opposition to colonial regime, politically still very weak, manifested itself first of all in the conscious aspiration for affirmation of national dignity, in the struggle against spiritual enslavement'.<sup>166</sup>

It has been stated above how assiduously R. Roy avoided a final break with orthodox Hinduism and how he strove to associate his reformist teaching with tradition, that is, essentially with the same religion that was the object of reformation. The other leaders of this movement were faced with the same difficult task, becoming all the more acute with the growth of national self-consciousness—viz. the critical restructuring of religion, envisaged simultaneously as a national tradition. And although they depended on 'purified' belief, the development of nationalism made them come further nearer to pre-reformist Hinduism. This outward closeness, while retaining the inward loyalty to reformist views, expressing itself in the reinterpretation of the positions of orthodox religion, led as a result to liquidation (within the limits of Ramakrishna's teaching) of the conflict between the new and traditional concepts. The attempts to get over the initial elitist character, to strengthen the influence of nationalistic ideas, the involvement into the sphere of propagation of bourgeois ideology of the new social strata, associated with medieval forms of world outlook, caused the movement to proceed backward, to mass religious consciousness. In the process of reformation, there was observed as a compromise even otherwise impending movement of mass consciousness itself coming as it were to join the reformation. Simultaneously with the development of nationalism was noted a gradual weakening of the critical attitude to traditional dogma.

Purely reformist (more precisely, enlightening-reformist) tendencies throughout remained alongside the bourgeois-



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nationalistic tendencies; at first the former dominated clearly, but gradually the latter got intensified, and these dominated in the teachings of the late nineteenth century.

It is in this background, incidentally, that such a complex, contradictory figure as K. Sen, on the whole unusual for reformation of Hinduism, becomes more understandable. The later period of his life coincided with the stage of replacement of mutual positions of the two tendencies, and his conception shows the clash of liberal illusions and bourgeois nationalism, an enlightening-reformist approach to religion and return to tradition through distinctively understood views of Ramakrishna.

## NEO-HINDUISM

Ramakrishna's neo-Hinduism (if we take it in Swami Vivekananda's interpretation, that is, from the positions of the next historical stage) completed the course of reformation to the reverse side. The reformation proper, that is, the line of changes within the religion, changes of confessional level, practically ended here. Thus, the essence of the first stage of reformation lies in the creation in Hinduism of a complex of bourgeois notions, which first practically contrasted with orthodox religion, but was later gradually absorbed by the system on the whole and occupied in it a definite place, co-existing with the complex of traditional concepts because of the right of being one of the supports of religious ideology.

## THE SECOND STAGE OF REFORMATION

The second stage of reformation of Hinduism (late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries), unlike the first, has an overall Indian character. It is associated with most important socio-economic shifts finding expression in the progress of capitalism in the country. In the cities the local intelligentsia begins to play an important role along with the national bourgeoisie. During this period the aspirations of the national bourgeoisie growing and consolidating their positions coincided with the

objective needs of development of India, consisting above all in the liquidation of colonial dependence. The contradictions amongst the new strata of Indian society, on the one hand, and the British powers representing the interests of monopoly capital of the metropolis on the other, became all the more intense. This intensification was the consequence not only of economic causes and not only of the struggle for 'their own' and 'foreign' capital, but also of the increase in national oppression and discrimination of Indians. Here it is relevant to recall the famous statement of V. I. Lenin that 'one of the most fundamental characteristics of imperialism lies just in that it accelerates the development of capitalism in the most backward countries and thereby widens and intensifies the struggle against national oppression'.<sup>167</sup>

In India this struggle was headed by the national bourgeoisie, but all classes, strata, and sections of the society were in some way or the other involved in the orbit of the ideas of bourgeois nationalism, which, specially at the initial stage and chiefly amongst the radical leaders of the bourgeoisie, had an undoubted religious tinge. Religion still virtually remained the common form of ideology and the ideas of bourgeois nationalism could be taken to the masses chiefly through it. At the same time, the participation of ever wider strata of *patil* bourgeoisie and peasants in the anti-imperialist movement meant the spreading of the stereotypes of mass consciousness peculiar to them.

It has already been stated that from the very first steps of reformation, a sign of equality was placed between Hinduism and national tradition, and that the dependence on the latter was, along with anti-colonialism, the most important feature of bourgeois nationalism.

In other words, towards the end of the 80s of the nineteenth century, that is, precisely when the Indian bourgeoisie actively functioned as a class both in economic and political fields, the attention of its ideologists is directed not to a reexamination of individual religious dogmas and positions, and not even to

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theological problems on the whole, but to religion as a means of solving the problems of social-political character.

The question arises: Can the processes in Hinduism associated with this be characterized as a new stage of bourgeois reformation ? Proceeding from the fact that religion, as before, continued to be the object of aim-oriented conscious changes touching not the sacral but its public and social functions, and the changes expressed themselves in imbibing in it ideas constituting the very essence of bourgeois ideology at that stage, we feel, it is methodologically right to reply to the given question in the affirmative.

Open to discussion is also the question whether one can regard the greatest social and political leaders of the said period—Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh, B. G. Tilak, not to speak already of M. K. Gandhi—as religious reformers ? In the system of views of each of them, the problems of modernization of religion were raised and decided not as independent and paramount in themselves but as related to the development of the ideas of bourgeois nationalism. But since reformation was objectively one of the aspects of their teachings, we may conventionally call these leaders reformers of the second stage, or later reformers.

Here we shall not touch on the entire system of their views (more so because there is a vast literature devoted to this, including also in Russian) and shall restrict ourselves only to a survey of their religious-reformist views.

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

One of the best known Indian social leaders of the late nineteenth century—not only in the country, but also beyond its borders—was Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). He owed his fame in no small measure to his participation in the work of the World's Parliament of Religions (USA), where he had a roaring success. But apart from this, his ardent patriotism, humanism, message of self-sacrifice and of work for the good

of the homeland could not but attract the attention of his contemporaries.

Narendranath Datta (such was the real name of Vivekananda<sup>168</sup>) was born in Calcutta in the family of an attorney—a man of liberal views, having a preference for the Bible and for the poems of Hafiz to sacred texts of Hinduism. Incidentally, under the roof of Datta's home, there lived people of all sorts of conflicting views. Narendranath's grandfather, for a number of years the business partner of his father, an assistant to a British attorney, all of a sudden renounced everything and became a wandering monk; the mother was a zealous Shaivite.<sup>169</sup>

In the college Narendranath proved himself a brilliant student. He read a lot, including the works of Darwin, European philosophers (even sent his critical observations to Herbert Spencer), and took active part in sports. He was fascinated by the personality of Keshav Chandra Sen, and started attending the meetings of the Brahmo Samaj. But in 1878, after a split in the society, despite his young age (he was only 15), he sided not with his idol but with the organizers of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Disappointed with the work of the Brahmo Samajists, he turned to Debendranath Tagore, and later joined the Masonic Lodge. In 1881, he met Ramakrishna, who at once marked him amongst his disciples though Vivekananda was the 'only one who dared to doubt'<sup>170</sup> the teaching of his preceptor).

Narendranath's father passed away around this time, and the family had to face an extremely hard situation. Later, he recalled: 'I was dying of starvation. Barefooted, I went from office to office, and was refused everywhere. I learnt by experience what human compassion is. This was my first contact with real life; and I discovered that there is no place in it for the weak, poor, forsaken.'<sup>171</sup>

During this difficult period Vivekananda came still closer to Ramakrishna, and after the death of the latter, led the association of his disciples, who had become monks. For some time the 'brothers' lived together in a half-ruined house, but

later gradually dispersed. Vivekananda also went away. For two years he wandered all over India, on foot, meeting all sorts of people. Lastly, he reached the southernmost point of the country, viz. Cape Comorin. Standing on a lonely rock in the sea, in the process of meditation, Vivekananda arrived at the important truth that this wandering of the 'saints' was practically useless and that it was necessary to direct his efforts to the awakening of the people. There and then he decided to go to the USA to attend the World's Parliament of Religions to attract attention to the position of the poor in India.

Vivekananda arrived in Chicago, without having an invitation and without knowing even the correct date of the opening of the Parliament. Besides, he lost the address of the organizing committee, and had to spend the first night at the railway station. However, his speech at the opening of the Parliament made him known all over America. He stayed on in the USA, giving lectures, trying to gather money for the fund for helping the starved in India, and then came to England and France where he propagated Vedanta, and lastly to Holland and Italy.

On return home in 1896, he was received like a victor. Here he established a religious-social organization—the Ramakrishna Mission, and actively took to sermonizing. After another visit to Europe and the USA, he settled down at Belur, but passed away soon after at the age of 39.

Swami Vivekananda was markedly different from the nineteenth century leaders preceding him, both in the critical, negative aspect of his teaching as well as in the constructive, positive aspects. His teaching reflected a qualitatively new stage of bourgeois reformation, whose means, methods, and objectives underwent considerable changes. He focussed attention on the social aspects of Hinduism, on expansion of the scope of religion by its assimilation of a whole complex of progressive ideas and concepts.

Vivekananda's works do not have that critical approach to

Hinduism which was the characteristic of the reformers of the early period and which had evoked negative reaction from Vivekananda. He explains his differences with his predecessors like this: 'The difficulty seems to be that we are losing faith in ourselves day by day. That is my objection against the reformers. The orthodox have more faith and more strength in themselves, in spite of their crudeness; but the reformers simply play into the hands of Europeans and pander to their vanity'.<sup>172</sup>

He tried not to make the differences of opinion subject of wide discussion, but in his private correspondence with those caring for his views he unambiguously dissociated himself from the Brahmo Samajists, particularly from K. C. Sen and P. C. Mazoomdar. 'The Brahmo Samaj...died out', says Vivekananda, 'and I am not sorry, neither glad that it is died. It has done its work, viz. social reform.' Its religion was not worth a pie for him.<sup>173</sup> It was just the reformist activity of the society aiming at bringing about social change that made him keep his membership (true, not for long) of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, although later he appraised these reforms too from different positions: 'Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathiser in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the *condition of the masses*'.<sup>174</sup> It is interesting that Vivekananda had a more benign attitude towards the Arya Samajists, and firmly refused suggestions to criticize them publicly. Obviously, he was concerned more with the upholding of Hinduism, than with attacks on it from the side of Brahmo Samaj.<sup>175</sup>

Many questions which agitated the reformers were simply ignored by him, not particularly bothering to enter into arguments. For instance, he categorically declared: '...*there is no polytheism* in India',<sup>176</sup> and had the same attitude towards idol worship too.<sup>177</sup> Vivekananda, as though deliberately, closed his eyes to the said questions—this was made easy by the fact that these had already found a reinterpretation in the

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teaching of Ramakrishna. And although some traits of traditional Hinduism, say, the dominance of the Brahmins or the concept of ritual profanation, did arouse his indignation, on the whole he had a rather apologetic approach to dogma.

He was worried, though, not so much over religious problems as over the position of India of his time. And how so-much he might have stayed away from the terminology of politics, his entire activity was undoubtedly anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. He endeavoured to rouse his contemporaries to activity for the good of the country and to awaken in them a confidence in the great future of India, to generate in them a sense of dissatisfaction over the dependent position of the country, and did also at the same time reprimand them for apathy, indifference, and passivity.<sup>178</sup>

In many works of Swami Vivekananda, and specially in his speeches in the USA and Europe, the Indian national character appeared as the focus of all virtues; however, in his sermons 'for internal use', he assigned these virtues to the field of the ideal or declared them as belonging only to the past. In his private correspondence with like-minded persons he did not hesitate to express himself openly. He called India a 'country of beggars', a 'country of women and eunuchs', etc. The psychological portrait of a contemporary created by him included such traits as weakness, fear, lack of confidence in himself and his powers.

## PASSIONATE LOVE FOR THE COUNTRY

However, when Vivekananda glorified the virtues, nobility, and religious toleration of the Indians, and when he abused them for their cowardice and weakness, he was, undoubtedly, guided by a passionate love for his country and his people. His purpose was to awaken in his countrymen a sense of national pride and sense of shame for their denigrated position, a shame which, however, had, in its turn, to awaken a desire to change life. As Marx aptly stated, 'shame is already a revolution of its own kind. . . . Shame is an anger of its own kind,

only directed within. And if a whole nation really were to have a sense of shame, it would be like a lion who contracts his whole self, getting prepared for the jump'.<sup>179</sup>

What exactly, in his view, was the cause of the 'degradation of the nation' ? The main reasons, according to Vivekananda, were the poverty of wide sections of population, their illiteracy, and the indifference of the propertied classes to the needs of the people. 'I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses', he said in an interview, 'and that is one of the causes of our downfall'.<sup>180</sup> And at another place : 'Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them'?<sup>181</sup> 'India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made happy'.<sup>182</sup>

Another reason of the downfall as seen by him was in the isolation of the country, in the rigidity of the prejudices, particularly in the oddness of the injunction prohibiting the Indians from crossing the sea. Here he usually cited the example of Japan. 'I want that numbers of our young men should pay a visit to Japan and China every year. Especially to the Japanese, India is still the dreamland of everything high and good. And you, what are you ? . . . talking twaddle all your lives, vain talkers, what are you ? Come, see these people, and then go and hide your faces in shame. A race of dotards, you lose your caste if you come out ! Sitting down these hundreds of years with an ever-increasing load of crystallized superstition on your heads, for hundreds of years spending all your energy upon discussing the touchableness or untouchableness of this food or that . . . what are you ? And what are you doing now'?<sup>183</sup>

The two ideas which were the object of constant, uncompromising criticism from the side of Swami Vivekananda were man's inborn sinfulness<sup>184</sup> (this was particularly stressed by missionaries) and non-resistance to evil of the weak. While the former in its pure form was on the whole alien to Hinduism and was present only in the form of 'law' of Karma and dogma of transmigration of souls (discarded practically



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in the course of reformation), the latter was an integral part of the religious ethics of India. Vivekananda did not wish to reconcile himself with its weakening influence. He did not totally discard it or shift it to the category of the ideal, but showed that this ideal could be attained by means directly opposed to it—non-resistance must be arrived at through active non-acceptance of evil in all its manifestation. In his work *Karma-yoga*, Swami Vivekananda wrote: 'Before reaching this highest ideal, man's duty is to resist evil; let him work, let him fight, let him strike straight from the shoulder. Then only, when he has gained the power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue'.<sup>185</sup>

One who has not learnt to resist evil violates his religious duty. Vivekananda asserted: 'He [the householder] must not sit down in a corner and weep, and talk nonsense about non-resistance'.<sup>186</sup> And further: 'Inactivity should be avoided by all means. Activity always means resistance. Resist all evils, mental and physical; and when you have succeeded in resisting, then will calmness come. It is very easy to say, 'Hate nobody, resist not evil', but we know what that kind of thing it generally means in practice'.<sup>187</sup>

## SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

Swami Vivekananda regarded Hinduism (as treated by him) as the means of social emancipation; turning to religion with this object was for him a specific trait of India: 'The Englishman can understand religion through politics, the American through social reforms; but we can understand even politics and sociology through religion. This is the theme, the rest are only variations in the national life-music'.<sup>188</sup> Together with this, he tried to apply this method also across the borders of India: 'We shall address all people in the language of their own orthodoxy'!<sup>189</sup>

On the other hand, Vivekananda knew that the need for making use of religion was related simply to a definite historical stage and that other approaches were also possible in future.<sup>190</sup>

For the religion to be an effective instrument in the fight for the progress of the country and emancipation of the masses, he very firmly shifted the inner accents in Hinduism and broadened the scope of religion, associating it with the field of practical work, and not of abstract judgements: 'Religion is not words and not theory. . . . Its essence is not in listening and accepting. It is in being and becoming'.<sup>191</sup>

It is natural that, in such an approach, there should be an insistence on 'work in the world'—the idea which is the *leit-motiv* of all works of Vivekananda. The 'work in the world' acquired a special significance, and particular importance was given not to great accomplishments which a person is sometimes capable of, but to scrupulous fulfilment of everyday, routine responsibilities not perceptible at first glance. Such work, according to Vivekananda, was of the nature of religious duty and was contrasted by him with asceticism: 'It is useless to say that the man who lives out of the world is a greater man than he who lives in the world; it is much more difficult to live in the world and worship God than to give it up and live a free and easy life'.<sup>192</sup> In other words, the sphere of application of creative efforts as recommended by religion changed, and essentially a new, religiously justified meaning was given to the existence of man—the ultimate goal was shifted from the world of that side to the world of this side.<sup>193</sup> Besides, preference of worldly occupations to asceticism meant an attempt to change the moral ideal, the replacement of the medieval ideal by the bourgeois.

#### SERMON OF ACTION

And the sermon of action and bourgeois-reformist non-acceptance of asceticism was taken by Swami Vivekananda from Ramakrishna; only for the priest of the Kali temple this position was simply one of the theoretical aspects of his teaching but for Vivekananda—the base of his practical activity. He never tired of stressing that Ramakrishna's precepts served as the starting-point of the complex of his ideas, and so

frequently referred to the authority of the teacher, so steadfastly limited his role to being a simple disciple 'at the feet of Ramakrishna', that both in India and abroad their names were almost indivisible.

No doubt, the religious reformation of Swami Vivekananda was in many ways prepared by Ramakrishna's sermons, namely by the following characteristics : the tendency to reconcile the contradictions of Hinduism, the attempt to create internally a logical system, and also to bring together the viewpoints of reformers and the orthodox, putting forward the idea of validity of every religion. All this together marked the completion of the first stage of reformation and simultaneously served as the basis for the beginning of the second stage. Removing the theoretical divergencies of views between the reformers and the orthodox, and placing their views at various steps of one religious system, Ramakrishna thereby made it considerably easier for his disciple to turn Hinduism into a means of struggle for the betterment of the position of the people, for national revival.

However, when one ponders, one finds between Ramakrishna's and Vivekananda's views far greater dissimilarities than similarities. This is accounted for by their subjective differences as well as the changed social-political conditions, and, chiefly, by the different objectives which both the preachers had before them.

Soon after the return of Swami Vivekananda from his first visit to USA, the other disciples of Ramakrishna openly turned against him, accusing him of not conforming his work to the tenets of the teacher.<sup>194</sup> 'Hands off !'—Vivekananda replied to them. 'Who needs your Ramakrishna ? Who needs your *bhakti* and *mukti* ? Who bothers what the texts say ? I would gladly go to hell a thousand times if I can lift my countrymen immersed in *tamasa*, if I can put them on their feet, make them people, inspired by the spirit of Karma-yoga. I am not a follower of Ramakrishna or whoever it is, I am a follower of those who carry out my plans. I am a servant not of

Ramakrishna or anybody else, but of those who serve others and help them, without thinking of their own *mukti*'.<sup>195</sup>

This controversial and vehement reply shows one of the chief differences of the disciple from the teacher. Ramakrishna was above all a religious leader while Vivekananda—a social one. The words of K. Marx, said about Luther, are fully applicable to the former : '...religion was for him the *direct truth*, so to say, *nature*'.<sup>196</sup> But for Vivekananda religion was mainly a means of coming together, a language understood alike by all sections of population, and in this language he hereafter expounded not the religious ideals alone. And here lies the difference in the methods for—Ramakrishna, individual talks and precepts in the form of parables (although also reflecting ideological shifts of the period); for Vivekananda, participation in thousands of meetings, daily lectures, interviews, speeches (although also having a religious tinge). It is impossible to imagine the former in Chicago at a world religious gathering, just as it is impossible to think of the latter spending his life in a cottage, teaching a few followers.

#### A COMPARATIVE STUDY

For Ramakrishna religion was the highest truth. For the rationalist Vivekananda, it is like science, with no place for anything secret, mystical, and supernatural. He explains : 'The chemist never requires demons, or ghosts, or anything of that sort to explain his phenomena . . . And this is one of the features of science which I mean to apply to religion'.<sup>197</sup> 'The idea of supernatural beings may rouse to a certain extent the power of action in man, but it also brings spiritual decay. It brings dependence; it brings fear; it brings superstition. It degenerates into a horrible belief in the natural weakness of man'.<sup>198</sup> And further : 'Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tell him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him'.<sup>199</sup>

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While Ramakrishna preached the principle of salvation by faith,<sup>200</sup> Vivekananda gave firm preference to reason : 'It is wrong to believe blindly. You must exercise your own reason and judgment; you must practise and see whether these things happen or not. Just as you would take up any other science, exactly in the same manner you should take up this science for study'.<sup>201</sup> 'Are the same methods of investigation which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of Religion'?—he wrote a few years after the death of the teacher.—'In my opinion, this must be so, . . . If a religion is destroyed by such investigation it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes, the better . . . If yes, it will become a thousand time stronger'.<sup>202</sup>

The thought of divine determinism is absolutely alien to him : 'The answer that it is the will of God is no explanation'.<sup>203</sup> He is also not satisfied by references to the authority of the sacred texts : ' . . . the books fighting between themselves cannot be the judges', these are the outgoings, the effect of man's constitution; man made these books.<sup>204</sup> True, he does not, though, fully reject the Vedas and even stresses their eternal, non-transient significance, yet he places them in the same line as Geometry, Logic, and Chemistry.<sup>205</sup>

Vivekananda tried to make religion 'a thing of the earth', rejecting miracles and things which do not submit themselves to elucidation: 'Anything that is secret and mysterious in the systems of yoga should be at once rejected'.<sup>206</sup> And when he was asked about miracles supposed to have been performed by Ramakrishna, he evaded the answer: 'I do not know miracles and do not understand them'.<sup>207</sup>

## CONSISTENCY AND LOGIC

However, Vivekananda's position was not free from contradictions—the ideas of enlightenment were in him clothed in 'alien garb', the rationalistic teaching was expounded in the language of religion, this made it easy to understand but deprived the system of his views of inner consistency and logic.

Thus, the concept of 'religion' has a totally different meaning in the teachings of Ramakrishna and in the works of Vivekananda. The Calcutta priest, despite the fact that he reinterpreted the dogmas of Hinduism, considered the knowledge of God and confluence with him as the ultimate task of every human life and its highest attainment, that is, set himself the same goal as the usual orthodox religious preachers before him. He did not make any exception for himself—he considered the knowledge of God his main purpose, and everything else, including the training of his disciples—secondary and derivative. Vivekananda, putting forward the ideal of service to masses, placed in the centre of his system not God but man; the confidence of the individual in his own powers was for him immeasurably more important than belief in god: '... We must have faith in ourselves first and then in God. He who has no faith in himself can never have faith in God'.<sup>208</sup> And not the knowledge of God but the knowledge of human being becomes for him the main theme of sermon,<sup>209</sup> because 'the man is the highest of all beings...the earth is higher than all heavens'.<sup>210</sup> From here comes Swami Vivekananda's understanding of the service of God as the service of man so characteristic of him: 'We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called man'.<sup>211</sup>

#### INTEREST IN THE NEEDS OF THE MASSES

It is in the background of this idea that Vivekananda's singular interest in the needs of the masses of India should be perceived. His thoughts in this regard are also expressed in the form of religious-moralistic precepts and advice to his disciples. 'Where have you to go, where to search for God',—he asked,—'are these poor, these unfortunate, these weak people not really the gods? Why not first pray to them? Why dig a well at the banks of the Ganges'?<sup>212</sup> Turning to his followers, he appealed for working in the name of spiritual liberation and material progress of the masses: 'Swear to devote all your lives to the work of saving these 300 millions,

going lower and lower each day'.<sup>213</sup> As noted, he considered their emancipation the foremost task and, religion had to fulfil this task that is, the aim of religion was understood by Vivekananda in a reformer's spirit—not the entertainment of the sufferers, not passive accumulation of good deeds in the expectation of a reward in future existence, but active day to day help, called upon to assist in the spiritual growth of the nation and improvement of material position of the people. He consistently stressed the need for practical work, and appraised religion just from the standpoint of its social advantage : 'I do not believe in God or in religion which cannot wipe out the tears of widows or give a piece of bread to the orphan'.<sup>214</sup> And at another place: 'Bread ! Bread ! I do not believe in a God, who cannot give me bread here, giving the eternal bliss in heaven' !<sup>215</sup>

Preserved is the record of a wonderful dialogue between Swami Vivekananda and a preacher of a Society for Protection of Cows, which took place in Calcutta in 1897, soon after the former's return from his first visit to USA and Europe. This dialogue showing the clash of the orthodox and the reformist points of view, is reproduced below with minor abridgements. It hardly needs any comments:

*Vivekananda* : What is the objective of your association ?

*Preacher* : We save our *Go-mata*<sup>216</sup> from the butchers, acquire them, organize special enclosures where we look after the old, sick and helpless cows.

*Vivekananda* : Splendid idea ! Where do you get the funds from ?

*Preacher* : These are brought to us as donations by persons of high thinking, like you.

*Vivekananda* : What capital do you have with you ?

*Preacher* : Mainly the traders support the work of our society and assist it. They help us with considerable contributions.

*Vivekananda* : The Central India is in the grip of terrible

famine. The government reports mention that nine hundred thousand have died of starvation. Is your Society doing something to save these starving persons from death ?

*Preacher* : We do not give any help at the time of famine etc. Our objective is to save only *Go-mata*.

*Vivekananda* : When hundreds and hundreds of thousands of your countrymen, following the same religion as you, are dying of hunger, do you not think it your duty to help these unfortunate persons ?

*Preacher* : No. Hunger is the result of their *karma*, their sins. Here is an example of "like *karma*, like results".

*Vivekananda* : Sir, I have no sympathy for such societies that have no concern for man and, seeing thousands of starving brothers, dying from famine, do not bother to save them, do not offer them a single piece of bread, but waste millions on the protection of birds and animals. . .

*Preacher* : What you say is of course true, but the *Shastras* teach that 'cow is our mother'.

*Vivekananda* : Yes, I can fully imagine that cow is our mother : who else can give birth to such talented sons ?<sup>217</sup>

Vivekananda and Ramakrishna also differ in that while the Calcutta priest, in accordance with tradition, considered individual salvation (enlightenment) first and foremost and taught his followers that only on attaining the state of *mukti* can they 'save' others (just as the wagons of a train can reach some point only if they are pulled by an engine), Vivekananda's orientation for the same disciples of Ramakrishna was different: 'Since you seek first your own salvation, your way lies to hell ! Attain salvation for others if you wish to attain the Highest ! Kill in you the desire of personal *mukti*' !<sup>218</sup> In his view, even the most important positions of religion were just secondary compared with this objective: 'Couldn't you give one life for



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the service of others ? In the next life you may read Vedanta and other philosophies. Give this life for the service of others...'<sup>219</sup>

Lastly, the main difference between Vivekananda and Ramakrishna is like this. Ramakrishna suggesting with ever renewed vigour the idea of equal validity of all religions, nonetheless enjoined on everyone to observe the rules and writs exclusively of his 'own' faith. Vivekananda instead cautioned against too strict an adherence to the dogmas of any one 'organized religion'.<sup>220</sup> He identified a certain spiritual base, common to all religions, and this base for him was Vedanta. The Vedantic notion of soul of man as a divine essence serves as the starting point for understanding the place of man in the world, his religious duty.

Swami Vivekananda's reforms found expression not in reinterpretation of individual dogmas of Hinduism but in its partial modernization, and in the attempts to resort to it for solving the pressing social-political problems. He virtually castrated the definite religious system of its theological content and filled it with worldly secular ideas, discarding the supernatural, including into it even disbelief and atheism, focussing his teaching on the concern for the future of India, for her spiritual and material growth.

### UTOPIAN PATH

However, Vivekananda's sermons were never concrete enough. The objectives of the movement led by him (particularly in the last period of his life) were fairly abstract, and the path suggested by him (the building up of 'new people' by means of self-perfectioning, their consolidation into a 'nation of new people', and subsequent 'self-assertion' right up to the attainment of *swaraj*) was overtly utopian. It is not ruled out that such a tendency was the result of the understanding of vainness of efforts: objectively these could have helped in establishing in India only a capitalist society, whose ills he so scathingly exposed. But the quests of an alternative to this

society, undertaken by him mainly along the path of religious utopianism, were doomed to failure.

Vivekananda's teaching and work marked a phase of transition of its own kind—from Ramakrishna in whose message the notions of the traditional and bourgeois complexes in Hinduism had an equally respectable place, to Aurobindo Ghosh and B. G. Tilak in whose works the idea of the need to use religion in the name of national revival received further development.

### **Aurobindo Ghosh**

Two contrasting periods can be precisely and clearly discerned in the work of Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950). For the last thirty years of his life he was a recluse in the *asrama* built by him in Pondicherry, viz. then a French colonial possessions in India. Very rarely reacting to the events taking place in the world, he allowed only a select group of people to come to him. At these meetings too the disciples sat silently looking at the face of the teacher; only the most trusted people had direct contact with him. This period full of mystical quests is not touched here. Of interest for our theme is the other, initial period, when Aurobindo Ghosh was one of the most eminent leaders of the national liberation movement, virtually a leader and inspirer of secret terrorist societies, the real holders of power of the thought of patriotically minded intelligentsia.

The childhood years of Aurobindo did not give grounds to assume that he would become first an active fighter for national liberation, and then a Hindu mystic and thinker giving his own interpretation to Vedanta.<sup>221</sup> His father, a physician by profession, educated in the metropolis, had returned home, full of illusions about British system of way of life. He came in conflict with his orthodox countrymen, demanding that he should perform the rites of purification after his voyage across the sea. The conflict was solved by transfer of Doctor Ghosh to Calcutta, and when children were born to him, he tried to bring them up in a purely European spirit. The five year old Aurobindo (with his brothers) was sent to a restricted English

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school in Darjeeling. Two years later, he was sent to England and lodged with the family of a priest who was given strict instructions not to allow the boy to meet Indians and to keep him fully free from Indian influence. As Aurobindo himself later recalled, these instructions were strictly followed and he 'grew up, knowing nothing of India, her people, religion and culture'.<sup>222</sup> Here, it is enough to say that by the moment of his return home (1893) he had brilliant mastery over English, read and wrote French, Italian, German, a little of Spanish, studied Latin and Greek, but did not know the native Bengali language.

The father's wishes did not however fully materialize. The life made its own changes in Doctor Ghosh's future plan. A keenly observing youth, inquisitive, gifted with literary talent, Aurobindo, during fourteen years of his stay in England, had frequently made sharp criticism of the British colonial regime in India, and had a very sarcastic attitude to the activity of the then leaders of the Indian National Congress. Besides, familiarizing himself with nationalist ideas, the young Aurobindo became a member of a secret organization 'Sword and Lotus' in Cambridge. Even the father, to some extent losing his liberal illusions, used to send to his son in England clippings from Bengali newspapers, criticizing the policy of the British Government which he in his letters called 'heartless Government'.<sup>223</sup>

In India Aurobindo tried to fill the gaps in his education and studied the culture and art of his native country, its history and languages, read the ancient texts, the works of social and religious leaders and of the reformers, and above all of Vivekananda. The influence of the latter's ideas was constantly felt during this period and afterwards. Vivekananda's lectures and speeches were discussed in secret circles led by A. Ghosh, whose closest associates now also included Sister Nivedita (Margaret Nobel), a disciple of Vivekananda, and his brother Bhupendranath Datta.

Here we shall observe only one aspect of Vivekananda's

influence on Aurobindo Ghosh's outlook, without touching the whole complex of questions relating to it. We are talking of the religious-reformist tendencies reflected in Aurobindo's political doctrine. This doctrine is expounded partly in the language of religious symbols. The concepts like *dharma*, *yajna*, *mantra*, are endowed with secular content, and these are used as terminological formulation of ideas of bourgeois nationalism. In the articles and pamphlets, poems, and speeches of this period, Aurobindo invariably invoked religion. But religion as understood by him was not a traditional complex of dogmas, ideas, and precepts and not even that bourgeois variety of it which took shape in India as a result of the activity of reformists of the first stage, that some spiritual base for uniting the believers and cementing their unity. Like Vivekananda, A. Ghosh proceeded from the Vedantic ideas of potentials of divine creative power in each person, the realization of which, in his view, lay in the awakening of national self-consciousness. Here the concept of 'nation' also received a religious interpretation—'as an embodiment of one of the aspects of divine source'.<sup>224</sup>

#### SELF-SACRIFICE AND SUFFERING

The way to revealing and ascertaining in practice the divine potentials of a personality, according to A. Ghosh, lay through self-sacrifice and suffering (the theme of suffering would be later taken up actively by M. K. Gandhi) in the name of complete revelation and finding out of possibilities before the nation. The sense of patriotism acquired a clear religious tinge. The love for the homeland and the worship of god merged, as merged India and the goddess Kali (Durga), the Great mother (whose cult is extremely widespread in Bengal), in the sermon of Aurobindo. 'Only when the country rises before our eyes and our reason as something higher than a handful of dust or a mass of individual personalities',—he wrote in 1907,—'only when it assumes the form of great Divine and Mother Power... only then will the petty fears and hopes vanish in all

absorbing love for the Mother and in the tendency to serve her, and only then will be born patriotism which will create wonders and save the condemned nation'.<sup>225</sup>

The ecstatic love for God was in Aurobindo Ghosh replaced by 'the joy that your blood is being shed for the homeland and for freedom'. Speaking about loyalty to one's country, he took recourse to the image of a tree whose roots are 'almost physical rapture from the touch with the mother soil, from a sensation of the wind blowing from the Indian seas, from rivers flowing from the Indian mountains, from the echos of Indian speech, music, poems, from familiar pictures. . . customs, dress, our Indian way of life'. And continuing this comparison, he wrote (in an article, not published at the time but used against him at the time of the trials in 1908-1909): 'The stump of this tree and its branches are the pride for our past, the pain for modern situation and confidence in future'. Its fruits are self-sacrifice and work for the good of the country.<sup>226</sup> But the tree survives, it will end only by a constant sense of love for the Mother and ceaseless service to it.

No less visually does Aurobindo characterize the British colonial yoke hampering development of India (in a letter to his wife, written in 1905): 'Some one perceives his country as something material—fields, plains, forests, mountains, rivers; I perceive my homeland as Mother, I give it my love, my prayers. If the vampire ready to suck her blood sits on her breast, what must her son do' ?<sup>227</sup>

To this question A. Ghosh gave a clear answer. He considered the fight for the liberation of India as a religious duty of every Indian. His own part in the national liberation movement in India in early twentieth century is well known. At a certain time of his activity he dreamt of creating some spiritual fraternity, whose members should be those who can renounce the 'world' and devote themselves to patriotic work (here it is interesting to mark the change in his teaching of traditional concept of asceticism). Besides, in his utopian formulations of the ideal society of the future, he saw 'factories and plants of

the members of the order, established by them not for the sake of deriving any profits but for the sake of the good of the country'.<sup>228</sup>

#### REORIENTATION OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY

As also for Vivekananda, the awakening of national consciousness was for Aurobindo Ghosh the result of essential reorientation of religious activity, though it should be noted that, unlike Vivekananda, he here suggested extremely concrete and attainable tasks. Religion became a canal of its own kind for penetration into the masses of ideas of anti-imperialist struggle. In this Aurobindo seems to have changed the traditional content of religion, considering that nationalism is just "the faith sent by god". As aptly observed by A. V. Raikov, 'in the conditions of India it was impossible to raise higher the ideology of nationalism by some different method'.<sup>229</sup>

The religion which A. Ghosh preached at the early stages of his work, had the objective not of individual enlightenment, not of liberation from the chain of rebirths, not the saving of the individual, but of helping in the awakening of national self consciousness. He tried to give it a life asserting character so that the religious ideas, and more truly the political ideas in religious garb, could help in the spiritual emancipation of Indians and their mobilization for the fight for independence of India. All this was for him subordinate to the tasks of the anti-imperialist struggle; the anti-feudal tasks were virtually not considered.

Some tendencies of spiritual development of Aurobindo Ghosh, completely coming to the fore in subsequent years, made themselves felt also in the period surveyed here, though the significance of these tendencies at the given stage is clearly exaggerated by individual scholars. But it is important to note that, even after leaving active political work, he practically did not reappraise or censure the principles which had guided him when he played such a perceptible role in the Indian national-liberation movement.

## **B. G. Tilak**

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), one of the leaders of the left wing of the Indian National Congress, a leader of Maratha democrats, was an active and consistent fighter for the awakening of the masses at large and for their involvement in the general national anti-British movement. In the years of particular growth of this movement (1905-1908), he had in the words of I. M. Reisner, become the 'leader of all forces risen to give a decisive fight to colonialism'.<sup>230</sup>

It is natural that in these conditions he could not evade the questions of religion whose influence was so great on the life and consciousness of Indians. Besides, turning to it made it possible to put forward Hinduism regarded as a national tradition, as a contrast to the 'materialistic' ideology of colonizers. The religion itself did not occupy an important place in the system of Tilak's views, but his attitude to it was marked by a specific character for which Tilak and the so-called social reformers (that is, Brahmo Samajists and some leaders associated with the early stage of reformation of Hinduism) turned out to be practically in hostile camps.

In 1891 the Council under the Viceroy passed a law fixing the minimum age of marriage of girls at twelve. 'Sharply condemning the arranging of marriages in childhood years, the law-givers knew well that the practice of early marriages was observed mainly in the beliefs of the Indian society and often had only a ritual, symbolic meaning. Informed about the confusion prevailing amongst the orthodox Hindus, the British powers nevertheless willingly agreed to fulfil the wishes of 'social reformers' considering the new law a step forward in the fight for removal of medieval vestiges. The latter were right in their own way. But Tilak and his like-minded persons thought otherwise. For them the violation of the precepts of Hinduism, supported by an alien power, was an insult to national feeling'.<sup>231</sup>

Of course, Tilak did in no way deny the need for change in the way of life, but made use of the said law as a pretext

for mobilizing public opinion against British power, depending for this on the conservative religious sections of population. In his view any step from the side of the enemy, and he regarded the colonial powers as hostile forces, must invariably be resisted, irrespective of the means. He regarded as the allies of the British—as traitors—those Indian reformers who, in the changed environment and conditions of growth of national liberation movement, continued to fight only for carrying out reforms in the way of life with the support of the powers that be.

B. G. Tilak and his like-minded persons raised the defence of Hinduism to the ranks of religious duty. In particular, he actively supported the movement against the killing of cows though, as often asserted, he did not lead this movement.

The work of the Christian missionaries, and the assistance given to them by the Indians turning Christians, was decisively condemned by him. For instance, he started a campaign against the boarding house 'Sarada Sadan' specially established in Poona for young Hindus, with funds provided by American missionaries. The boarding house was headed by a Hindu turned Christian, the author of a book published in USA, in which he surveyed the hard lot of women in Hindu society, B. G. Tilak voiced his vehement opposition to this establishment on the pages of the newspapers edited by him, condemned the 'social' reformers who provided it financial support, and appealed to the orthodox Hindus to boycott the 'Sarada Sadan'. He asserted that those brought up in the boarding house were forced to adopt Christianity. The discussion in the press continued for about eight years. It is of interest that Tilak was not wrong in his prophecies: many boarders actually went through conversion rites, and later this establishment openly became Christian and was renamed as the House for salvation.<sup>232</sup>

It would appear that all these facts do not warrant considering Tilak a reformer of Hinduism; he, we see, defended the most conservative, the most orthodox positions seemingly contradicting his undoubtedly progressive political views. But



actually there is no contradiction here. The reformation of Hinduism at the given stage found expression already not in the rejection of those precepts of religion which did not correspond to the new, bourgeois understanding of the world, of man etc., but in decisive interpretation of its content, in a change in its function and lastly in the politicalization of religion (here Tilak's contribution was extremely significant).

It is just from this standpoint that the celebrations initiated by him in 1893 in honour of the elephant-faced god Ganesa should be appraised. Having a long national tradition, these included elements of usual 'deism'—of manifestation, singing, music, carrying the statue of the deity and immersing it in water—and also new elements introduced by Tilak and his like-minded persons, including giving lectures on 'various subjects of national significance'.<sup>233</sup>

Thus, B. G. Tilak tried to awaken in the people a sense of patriotism, a sense of pride for the past, and called upon his countrymen to unite, and in this did not virtually differ from Vivekananda and his younger associate Aurobindo Ghosh. It may be added here that in a book written in jail and devoted to the interpretation of the *Bhagavadgita* he offered an interpretation of the source book, bordering on the views of Vivekananda. Resting on the text of the ancient monument, he put forward the ideal of the man of his time. It is remarkable that Tilak (as also Vivekananda) considered fundamental the path of *Karma-yoga*, that is of active action.

True, in contrast to other reformers of the second stage, he was, in his speeches, guided to a definite extent by the traditional complex in Hinduism. However, since at this stage reformation had spread to whole Hinduism and not only to the bourgeois complex in it, the turning even to the most conservative ideas and the struggle against the atheist reformers was essentially a manifestation of reformist tendencies and not revival of orthodoxy.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA STUDIES IN SOVIET UNION

### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECOND (STAGE OF REFORMATION)

The emergence of the bourgeois variety of religion, legitimate for the emergence of the new social-economic order, and the later absorption of this variety by the traditional religious system, was an absorption determined by specific conditions of India and constituted the content of the first stage of reformation. At its second stage the reformist tendencies, as already noted, touch religion on the whole. Besides, these tendencies have a different character, and are different from the processes taking place in the period when new interpretation was given to traditional dogmas.

At this stage, coinciding with the development of national liberation movement, the bourgeois ideas find a religious garb. The focus now shifts to problems of correlation of believer and God, and of correlation of believer and society, while religion is regarded not as the personal affair of an individual but as a social phenomenon, solidly connected with political tasks. Its pioneering idea—the idea of God—is subjected to further consideration.

Thus, resting on the positions of Vedanta, according to which the soul of each person is a part of a single whole, Swami Vivekananda reconciles this position by shifting the accents and asserting the divine essence of man. As a contrast to the leaders of the first stage of reformation he offers a religious-philosophical conception of the divine potential of the individual, being, as it were, a particle of God, its soul being identical with the absolute. In the development of classical Vedanta, Vivekananda declares that the divine essence is in the greatest measure inherent in the poor and the oppressed and therefore a service to them means a service to God.

In Aurobindo Ghosh the same idea receives another interpretation, directly allied to the growth of national self-consciousness: for him God and motherland are identical concepts. The acceptance of such identification makes it

possible to merge the images of the mother-country and Kali, one of the foremost and most popular goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. This presupposes also the introduction of respective the fulfilment of religious duty. Of course, both Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghosh have in view service to the homeland, but in Ghosh this directly leads to the need for participation in national liberation movement.

The reformist interpretation of the idea of religious duty implies struggle for liberation of India, for the emancipation of the poorest strata of population—in the first instance, spiritual emancipation, viz. liberation from denigration, indecisiveness, 'complex of incompleteness' before the aliens, that is the colonial powers. This objective is served by sharp condemnation of the inertia and helplessness of wide masses of Indians, morally still not ready for active resistance. 'Our real enemy'—Aurobindo Ghosh declares—'is not any external power but our own inherent weakness, our cowardice, our egoism, our hypocrisy, our foolish sentimentalism'.<sup>234</sup> The same aim is served by the attempts at the reconstruction of idealized historical past of India and its spiritual traditions above all religions. In such a context it becomes understandable why the work of 'social' reformers, directed as before towards rejection of outdated customs and precepts, to criticism of traditional ideas, begins to be perceived as being contradictory to nationalistic ideas.

The religious duty, in the thought of later reformists, lies not only in assisting the awakening in the individuals of feelings of national pride and of dissatisfaction with the colonial position of the country, but also mainly in active struggle for its liberation. The political activity received religious sanction; each action directed towards the attainment of independence was regarded religiously justified.

'The political struggle', wrote Aurobindo Ghosh, 'has assumed a religious character, and the people are now faced with the question as to whether India—the India of holy *rishis*, the India which gave birth to Rama, Krishna, and the

Buddha, the India of Sivaji and Guru Govind—is eternally destined to remain stretched at the proud feet of the conqueror'.<sup>235</sup>

The very idea of nationalism is declared religious by A. Ghosh. 'Nationalism', he stated in one of his lectures, 'is not simply a political programme; nationalism is a religion, sent down by God...if you wish to be nationalists, if you accept the religion of nationalism, you must act in the religious spirit, you must remember that you are an instrument of God'.<sup>236</sup>

The criticism of the British, of their policy and their institutions simultaneously echoed all the more openly in the speeches of the reformers. 'What is the use of praising the fortress of your muscles, the excellence of your western institutions, if you cannot make Truth the basis of your society, if you cannot create a society responding to the highest Truth?'<sup>237</sup> declared Vivekananda.

Complaining that the Indians sit on 'purely British diet' and stressing that the British society is not better because of what Europe can offer,<sup>238</sup> Aurobindo Ghosh said: 'If India is destined to resurrect and become great, this will happen not by imitating the methods of British policy and trade and the institutions of metropolis but by raising our own civilization purified from the ills it was suffering from to still higher and more significant accomplishments than those which were marked in the past'.<sup>239</sup>

The criticism of 'materialistic civilization of the West', having had above all an anti-colonial trend, contained elements of condemnation of capitalism and was directly linked with the quests of 'its own path', with petty bourgeois designs of formulation of an 'ideal society'. Here it should be kept in mind that in the said period, in the words of E. N. Komarov, the Indian thinkers who had in some measure or the other criticized the bourgeois society, did not offer any economic programmes, even utopian, as alternatives to capitalism.<sup>240</sup>

In the conditions of the crisis appearing in the capitalist system on the one hand and the rigidity in India of patriarchal

precepts and ideas on the other, the reformers of the second stage endeavoured to chart out a special line of further development based on religious moralist principles. The views therefore of the bourgeois ideologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on social and political future of India assume the character of religious utopianism.

Expounded in the form of a thesis, these views shape like this: the building up of a new man, the building up of a nation of new people, the building up of a new, just society, the appearance of the revived India on the world arena, and, in the ultimate end, the spiritual rebirth (under the influence of India) of the whole world. The reformers presumed to solve gigantic tasks of this kind by means of religion or on its basis.

The way to the 'building up of a new man' lay, in their view, through religious self-perfectioning, on the whole based on the prescriptions of Ramakrishna (work in the world, but with constant thought of God; fulfilment of one's duty, but without the expectation of reward; love for enemies and striving for moral victory over them by persuasion etc.).

The new people had to constitute a new nation which was understood as a spiritual category, as a religious community. The objective essence of this concept, divested, in such interpretation, of most important signs (commonness of economy, territory, language, etc.), was distorted in a still greater measure by the fact that in a multi-confessional country as India is, there can be no talk whatsoever of religious commonness covering all believers.

The utopianness of the views on the possibility of building up a 'just society', that is, essentially a society of social compromise, found expression, in E. N. Komarov's words, in the conviction 'as though, having destroyed the British colonial dominance... it was possible,—without class struggle, in 'peace and harmony, offending nobody', with the help of religious-moral sermons, by means of restoration of some mediaeval institutions (community, caste organization), through 'simplification' etc.—to get over the social contradictions in the

Indian society itself, 'warning' capitalism, creating a society free from exploitation'.<sup>241</sup> As is known, the element of religious utopianism was very strong even in the Gandhian concept of '*Rama-rajya*'.

The criticism of western culture by the leaders of the second stage of reformation and their panegyrics for Hinduism found their logical conclusion in the idea of spiritual missionism. This idea is distinctly followed already in the teaching of Swami Vivekananda who saw the historical mission of India in -giving spiritual food to the undeological, unspiritual, 'materialistic West' 'in exchange' for scientific-technological achievements: 'India must learn from Europe how to subjugate external nature and Europe must learn from India how to subjugate the inner nature. We have been successful in developing one phase of mankind, they—the other. A combination of both—this is what is needed'.<sup>242</sup>

These formulations of Vivekananda reflected not only active attempts to awaken the national pride of Indians or his disappointment with the ideals of the West, but also the change of the role of India in the modern world as felt by him. India's gradually growing influence was in its own way shattered in the aspirations of the thinker to export Hinduism to beyond the borders of the country, to change its 'international status', and to raise this belief to the level of a world religion.

#### ACTIVITY IN USA

Swami Vivekananda's activity in the USA and Europe had a pioneering, proselytizing character. He attracted to Hinduism the Americans, British, Germans and there was one convert even from Russia—Swami Kripananda. 'It is time to capture the hostile supporting points',<sup>243</sup> he said, believing that active propaganda of Hinduism in the West could shatter the British empire from within, as the 'Jews shattered Rome'. He wrote: 'Hundreds of thousands of strokes within India are equal to one stroke outside it'.<sup>244</sup>

The idea of missionism was also caught by other reformers.

Aurobindo Ghosh, for instance, appealed that 'India must be revived, for this revival is necessary for the future of the whole world. India cannot vanish, our people cannot be dissolved, because from amongst the whole mankind it is just the Indians who have the highest and the most beautiful destiny, most important for human race. It is just India that is to give the world a religion in which all religions, sciences, and philosophies will be harmoniously accommodated, turning the mankind into a single soul'.<sup>245</sup> It followed from here that it was the duty of every Hindu to have a favourable attitude to tradition, to engage in active political struggle, and to help, through individual self-perfectioning, in the building up of an ideal society.

The reformers had a new approach also to problems of religious ethics. Everything that was useful and essential for the liberation of the homeland was declared moral and justified. The ideal of man fulfilling his religious duty without doubt and fear, was embodied in the image of the fearless *karma-yogi*. He might violate many taboos and restrictions about the application of force if he was acting in the name of the independence of the country. Underlying this image was the same Vedantic idea of man realizing the potentials of his divine essence.

In other words, one may conclude that the reformers at the given stage replaced the concept 'religion' by the concept 'religious philosophy'. What they propagated and called religion was in fact a politicalized version of idealistic philosophy genetically associated with Hinduism but gradually overstepping the purely religious boundaries.

Incidentally, the message of the reformers was meant simultaneously for all levels of religious consciousness. The reformation thereby touched not only the bourgeois complex of notions as in the preceding stage, but also the traditional complex. The results of this process were independent of the subjective aspirations of the preachers themselves. The politicalization of religion (from the point of view of history of

social thought, it would probably have been more correct to speak of use in politics of judgements of religious character, but for the purposes of unraveling our theme it is far more preferable to use just the given phrase, politicalization of religion) can serve to illustrate how their teachings are refracted at various levels of this consciousness. For Aurobindo Ghosh, for instance, this in practice meant bringing in of moral ethical criteria in the political work so as to fulfil one's duty in the best way, although in theory he fought for a terrorist organization of ascetics, with the name of Kali on the mouths of those destroying the aliens. And many revolutionaries did start their work by performing ceremonies before the image of this many-armed goddess with protruding tongue. The traditional Hinduism merged with ideas of bourgeois nationalism. The teachings of the first stage of reformation, so vehemently rejecting the statues of gods and the related rituals were, as it were, ignored by the people, combining the orthodox ideas and the new, reformist understanding of religious duty.

The recourse therefore to religion by later reformers had dissimilar consequences at various levels of consciousness: on the one hand, was observed a defiling of philosophy which showed the emergence of secularist tendencies, on the other a partial involvement of the traditional complex, which had not gone through reformation proper.

The latter was made easy also by the fact that, in the anticolonial speeches of leaders of the national liberation movement, religion was involved as a terminological source. If at the first stage the traditional religious symbols and concepts were endowed with newly emerged content of enlightenment, at the second stage these symbols started serving as an eloquent ornamentation of ideas of patriotism and national liberation. The religious phraseology, not so much because of subjective factors as owing to the objective need (as accessible to wide masses), was employed for expounding the ideas of bourgeois nationalism, secular in their origin, essence, and objective.



In practice this was expressed in the identification of Homeland and goddess Kali-Durga (Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, Aurobindo Ghosh and others), but mainly in the statement of new, usually political, ideas under the usual stereotypes (*maya*—liberal illusions in regard to the role of the British in India, *yajna*—the boycott of British goods, the sacred *mantra*—‘Bande Mataram’, *shakti*—striving for national liberation, etc.).

Such peculiar ‘secularization’ of ancient religious symbols secured greater intelligibility of ideas of bourgeois nationalism, made their penetration into the consciousness of the masses easier. But such use of religious phraseology potentially carried in it also the invariable distortion of the ideas themselves.

An important feature of the second stage of reformation of Hinduism was a rethinking on the role of religion in society—a rethinking aimed at giving it a dynamic, active, ‘this-sided’ character.

Like all other religions, the traditional Hinduism too—if one follows directly its cardinal dogmatic positions—is found to be weak, dependent on the individuality of the believer, and turns him into a state of helpless dependence. Not at all stages of development of religion is the forced passivity in it discovered equally distinctly, but it is ever present as a projection of man’s dependence on the will of God (gods), on the performance of rituals, on sacrifices, etc. In Christianity this is demonstrated by the idea of man’s primordial sinfulness. In Hinduism, as pointed out earlier, the law of *karma*, according to which the life of an individual is predetermined by his deeds and actions in the previous existence, serves as a well-known analogy of the concept of ‘primordial sin’. We shall add to this the strict regulation of all aspects of a Hindu’s life, from birth to death, and also the rigid injunctions of caste system, practically depriving him of the choice of profession and fixing his place in the complex structure of Hindu society. Passivity, fatalism, lack of initiative, become the ideal characteristics of the believer in the framework of traditional Hindu-

ism. Such a religion cannot in any way serve as the means of political agitation and of awakening of masses.

Already, the reformers of the first stage had essentially opposed the said characteristics of Hinduism, but the complex of bourgeois notions formed in it as a result of their activity did not instil into this faith 'historical optimism'. The bourgeois variety of religion presupposed inner individualistic spirituality in which the dependence of the believer on external or that-side forces and the passivity resulting therefrom were only checked but not removed.

The reformers of the second stage were also in the ultimate count not able to remove these: dependence and passiveness were enshrined in the religious consciousness itself. However, their conscious, pin-pointed attempt to neutralize the weakening influence of religion and to convert it into an active reforming force deserves to be noted—at least because this particularly and clearly reflects the overall contradictions of their positions when the very recourse to religion distorted and deformed their objectives.

Thus, a reappraisal of the role of religion as a social phenomenon lies in the tendency to impart a dynamic character to it (that is, to neutralize its weakening influence), in its politicization (that is, in shifting the accent from theological hyperbolic judgements to practical work in the name of national liberation), in 'making it a thing of the earth' (that is, in ignoring all enigmas, miracles, mystical aspects of religion), and, lastly, in understanding it as the cementing, spiritual basis of national unity.

Together with this, the functions of religion virtually changed:

1. There appears a communicative-organizational function. Religion begins to serve as a canal for the penetration into the masses of non-religious social-political ideas.
2. The compensatory function in its former, traditional sense, becomes secondary. Instead, it acquires a new, reformist significance in which the illusory compensa-

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tion in future life is replaced by 'this-sided' liberation as a result of active work, whose objective is no longer personal salvation but the good of the other people and of whole of India.

3. The regulative function starts playing an ever-increasing important role with the expansion of the mass base of national liberation movement. Here is observed a gradual weakening of the initial active ferment of the sermon of reformists of the second stage.
4. The uniting function, earlier characteristic only of the bourgeois complex, now spreads to the entire religion on the whole. At the first stage this function had moreover a different meaning, signifying the elimination of differences amongst reformers and followers of various sects and trends in Hinduism and also the followers of other religions of Hindustan. At the second stage it meant consolidation in the name of fight against colonialism.

## HINDUISM AND NATIONAL TRADITION

Placing the mark of equality between Hinduism and national tradition and at the same time advocating for the unity of the Indians irrespective of their faiths, the bourgeois reformers could not, of course, ignore the contradiction arising from it. The logic of development of social-political consciousness made them look for a common platform for the widest unification on countrywide scale. But the logic of initial turning to a particular religious system in a multi-confessional country practically reduced to nought these attempts. The urge to overcome such a mutual relationship was expressed in the two ideas offered by all reformists of Hinduism—viz. religious universalism and common national religion.

In a majority of leaders of reformation these two ideas had a sort of a harmony—all religions are equally true and, accordingly, a common national religion can be made out of individual elements of dogmas preached in India. Hinduism

and Islam definitely formed the main components of the common national religion, and the extent of involving Christian components was usually determined by the attitude of the particular reformist to British dominance.

But on scrutiny this harmony was found to be purely external: behind it, as a rule, was the glorification of Hinduism, which precisely was assigned the main absorbing role.

The ideas of religious universalism and common national religion were formulated earlier by Rammohun Roy. But while on the purely theoretical level he did recognize the equal truthfulness of all religions, in practice, as stated, he eulogized the Hinduism reformed by him, seeing in it a base for the unification of Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity which, in the process, were, in his system, divested of their central characteristics.

In Keshab Chandra Sen such a common base for the creation of some 'national religion' (Sen considered it possible to change it into a world religion) was not Hinduism but slightly Hinduized Christianity; true, Islam was also included but at the secondary level. He regarded his 'Church of New Divine Dispensation' as the direct continuance of the line of the Old and New Testament: the Old Testament from God, the Father; the New from God, the Son; and his Church from the spirit of the saint. In day-to-day routine of his organization Sen introduced some changed Christian practices: the sacrament, accompanied by the reading of the Gospel from Lucas (the blood and the body of 'all saints in Jesus Christ' were symbolized in their application to local conditions by rice and water; cross—by public bathing of the adults in a pool, called for this purpose the 'waters of the river Jordan'). Besides, in 1881, he appointed 12 apostles of the new religion, and towards the end of his life, while making conceptual concessions to Christianity, accepted the divinity of Christ, the dogma of Trinity and the teaching about the primordial sin. The pro-British leanings of K. C. Sen were manifest in the perceiving of colonial power as divine (of Queen Victoria—as the daughter

of God) and in reducing the loyalty to British crown to the rank of religious duty.

Despite the fact that in K. C. Sen's Church the link with the national tradition was only formal, this attempt, in no smaller measure than the attempts of other reformists can show the internal contradictoriness of the tendency to unite the ideas of religious universalism and common national religion. And Rammohun Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen had proceeded from the standpoint of equal validity of all religions formulated far back in the *Rig-Veda*, although the conclusions drawn by them were contradictory (Hinduism, enriched by elements of Islam and Christianity; Christianity with definite features of Hinduism and Islam).

The starting point for Dayananda Sarasvati formally was the acceptance of the same position. 'The main dogmas are common for all religions', he said, 'the dispute is about the unimportant ones.' But in practice his position was absolutely different. He did not strive to create any common Indian faith by means of synthesis: for him Hinduism already was such a common Indian religion. The only advice he could give to the adepts of other religions, be they Muslims or Christians, was to come over to Hinduism. 'Listen, O Christians !' he appealed, 'it is just the time for you to reject your wild religion and adopt the Vedic belief for the sake of finding joy in it.'<sup>246</sup> Dayananda did not restrict himself only to such appeals; even in practice he gave Hinduism a new trait not hitherto inherent in it—proselytization. The missionary activity of the Arya Samajists often led to clashes with Muslims.

Of course, it was not the intention of reformists of Hinduism to spoil relations with the followers of Islam. Even in the teachings of Dayananda, the anti-Muslim trend was a product of the glorification of orthodox Hinduism and was secondary with regard to the attitude to anti-British tendencies of this teaching. A dedicated nationalist, he sought in the faith of the ancestors, above all, a support for his anti-British views, but the excessive stress on the role of Hinduism started hurting

the Indian Muslims. The undermining in some measure or the other of the role of Islam was characteristic of all reformists of Hinduism whatever the statements they made or whatever the plans drawn of synthesis of the two religions. The unintentional, immoderate stress on Hinduism, and particularly the mixing up of the concepts 'Hindu' and 'Indian', could, and partly did actually, evoke a sharp reaction from the side of the Muslims. Irrespective of the subjective intentions of the reformists, the emerging bourgeois nationalism acquired in their works a distinctive Hinduist slant because of their turning to Hinduism as a national tradition.

This in the ultimate count was explained by the fact that, half a century later, the Muslim community got involved in the sphere of development of capitalist relations. The belated formation of bourgeois elements amongst the Muslims, compared with the Hindus, was in its turn the result of a number of factors. The British policy of inflaming religious differences and supporting alternately sometimes one community and sometimes the other, did not play the least role. In the first instance, the colonizers held rather an anti-Muslim position, for they looked at the Muslims as their potential opponents, still cherishing dreams of restoration of their previous might. Later, when bourgeois nationalism gained strength which it was not possible to reckon with, they held a decisively anti-Hinduist position.

#### QUEST FOR COMMON BASE

The lack of uniformity in capitalist development and the policy of the colonizers stood in the way of unification of Indians. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the bourgeois reformation of Islam, one of whose characteristic features was the preaching of 'muslim nationalism', became an additional factor hampering this unification. Nonetheless, the quest for a common base for the unification of all Indians, whatever the faiths they might be propagating, continued. Ramakrishna again offered the idea of truthfulness and uncontradictoriness

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of various dogmas; and, besides, made this idea the central one. He firmly stressed the tolerant attitude of Hinduism, though he did not like that people should change their faith and should (supposedly, for not going away from their goal) try various ways of attaining God. He believed it was necessary to fulfil all the stipulations of one's own religion. Ramakrishna illustrated this position (being, probably, a reaction to intensification of Christian elements in the views of K. C. Sen) by the following example: one person was going to Calcutta, all the time searching for the shortest route, and every time forced to start his journey over again; the result was that he did not reach Calcutta; in the same way, he said, a person changing his religion does not arrive at the result.

## RAMAKRISHNA'S APPROACH

Ramakrishna's approach to the removal of real and imaginary contradictions between the followers of various religions looked inwardly logical; it had the most subtle nuances very difficult to comprehend, enabling one to characterize this approach not simply as a platform for reconciling various religions, often offering absolutely different solutions to cardinal questions of world outlook, but also as a typical Hindu platform where the reconciliation was to be achieved only in the limits of Hinduist religious perception. Both Christ and Mohammad can find definite interpretation within Hinduism, but its main dogmas are conceptually unacceptable to Christianity and more so to the orthodox Muslims. Consequently, the trueness and uncontradictoriness of all religions, as propounded by Ramakrishna, has relevance [is their trueness] only from the point of view of Hinduism. From here there is only a step to the latter as a base for unification of other religions.

This step was taken by Swami Vivekananda too, joining the Hinduist proselytism of Dayananda and the religious universalism of Ramakrishna, and trying to present Hinduism, more truly Vedanta which he identified with Hinduism, as some common spiritual platform for the creation of a world

religion. In his dreams of this, Vivekananda imagined its temple in which God was to be worshipped exclusively in the form of a mystical formula "*om*" (and in abstract theoretization his world religion retained its Hinduist tinge).

The attempts to change the 'specific weight' of Hinduism amongst other religions in India and beyond her boundaries, even when these were directly aimed at achieving unity between Hindus and Muslims, inevitably acquired the character of 'Hindu nationalism'. And although almost all reformers up to Gandhi (inclusive) stood for the Hindu-Muslim unity, it could not be achieved. Amongst the many factors responsible for the failure, we shall mark only one—hypertrophy of the role of religion in general and of the specific religion, be it Hinduism or Islam, in particular. Turning to religion was legitimate and, as we have seen, even had its advantages, above all for the national bourgeoisie, but it had the reverse aspect. Unification on the basis of national interest was replaced by consolidation on the basis of religious community, in which there was for every confessional community a definite limit of accepting different views, the limit of conceptual and practical compatibility. These limits, because of the characteristics of their religions, were more broader for the Hindus than for the Muslims. The involvement of religion as a bearer of advanced ideas helped to cement the various sections of the society within the limits of one confession, but it also objectively led to gradual deterioration in the contradictions amongst the Indians and the preachers of various religions.

Thus, the main characteristic of the second stage of reformation was the finding of a religious justification for the ideas of bourgeois nationalism. Here the intensification of anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and also anti-capitalist tendencies was accompanied by the weakening of tendencies which were anti-feudal. The politicalization of religion, covering both the bourgeois as well as the traditional complex in Hinduism, was combined with a penegyric attitude to faith on the whole. The positions of the reformists of this period were best expressed



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in the words of Swami Vivekananda: "This is my method—to show the Hindus that they have to give up nothing, but only to move on in the line laid down by the sages and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude."<sup>247</sup>

### REFORMATION AND GANDHISM

In their inner essence the stages of reformation of Hinduism are a fair contrast. This contrast in their characteristics can be presented in a summary form in a table of its own kind as below:

<i>First Stage</i>	<i>Second Stage</i>
Modernization of religion, rejection of some of its outdated features and positions, rethinking on a number of principles	Use of religion with all its paraphernalia and load of traditions etc.
Change in conceptual content of religion; its dogmas found a new bourgeois interpretation (confessional reformation)	Change in role, functions, tasks of religion, bourgeois (secular) ideas found religious formulation (functional reformation)
Stress on critical attitude to religion	Dominance of penegyric beginnings in relation to religion
Mainly anti-feudal character of reformation proper—a relatively independent phenomenon	Mainly anti-colonial trend; a side character of reformation
Tendency of creating a bourgeois variety of Hinduism	Politicalization of Hinduism
Modernization of religion as a form of growth of bourgeois ideology; symbiosis of reformation and enlightenment	Transformable religious outlook as a part of bourgeois ideology; nationalism of oppressed nation

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### *First Stage*

Criterion of acceptability of religious dispensations—reason, intuition, sound sense

Hypertrophy of role of a definite religion, equated to national tradition

Main conflicting source—“old” and “new”

Spread of ideas and notions of new elements of Indian society

### *Second Stage*

Principle of appraisal—homeland, nation, tasks of anti-imperialist struggle

Hypertrophy of role of religion in general, equated to nationalism, that is clear sublimation of possibilities of religion as ideological system

Main opposition—“one’s own” and “alien”

Involvement of wide strata of population with their prejudices and traditions

### GROWTH OF BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY

The periodization of reformation of Hinduism practically corresponds with the stages of development of bourgeois ideology. The first stage comes in the beginning and in the middle of the 80s of the nineteenth century, which is followed by the second, which, in its turn, is divided into two sub-stages. Of these the earlier one ends with the period of reaction (the second decade of the twentieth century), and the later one—with the achievement of independence of India. The situation thereafter changes radically, and the role of religious reformation, being at the second stage a part of the ideology of national liberation movement, that is, a political factor, becomes essentially exhausted. Later on, the “residue phenomena” of reformation, including the individual aspects of its earlier stage, continue to remain there, but their analysis is beyond the scope of our present aim.

It is thought, there is no need for trying to ascertain still more precise dates of the reformation—say, the years 1885-

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1886 (formation of the Indian National Congress; and the death of Ramakrishna) which should be regarded as the beginning of the second stage; and the end of the first sub-stage should approximately be placed at the year 1920 (death of Tilak; turning of Aurobindo Ghosh into a mystic; and unfolding of a wide Gandhian movement).

### SIGNIFICANCE OF GANDHI

However, the question of the significance of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's teachings for bourgeois reformation of Hinduism seems relevant.<sup>248</sup> Here it should be remembered that Gandhism is far wider than the latter, though it included its elements into it. It is not expedient to set apart, in the independent stage of reformation, the period when Gandhism dominated the ideology of the national liberation movement.<sup>249</sup> The main characteristics and the main tendencies of the second stage of reformation were observed also in this period and no cardinal changes were introduced compared with the preceding stage.

Considering the factors noted, it is, we feel, permissible to correlate Gandhi's teaching (in some aspects) with the second stage of bourgeois reformation as an extremely specific phase of it. The most important feature of this teaching was the religious interpretation of political, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist actions, having a common national character.

V. I. Lenin wrote that 'expressing of political protest under religious cover is a phenomenon characteristic of all peoples at a certain stage of their development.'<sup>250</sup> These words to a considerable extent are applicable also to the movement whose virtual leader was M. K. Gandhi. He measured every step of his against religious ethical norms, giving it a definite religious interpretation.

Swami Vivekananda's demand to consider religion a sphere of realization of ethical precepts, and also the use by extremist leaders of religious phraseology for publicizing the national liberation *ideas*, became for Gandhi, for his practical work, a

religious justification of the *methods* of anti-colonial struggle of the wide masses of India. The foremost of the methods publicized by him was the non-violent resistance, based on the principle of fulfilment of religious duty in the spirit of sacrificial readiness, that is, of active participation in the movement for the independence of the country. It is important that *satyagraha* was understood not as passive resistance but as 'non-violence of the strong'. In other words, distinctively combined in this doctrine were the idea of politicalization of religion, the sermon of fearlessness, which had also been characteristic of Gandhi's predecessors, and the categorical rejection, introduced by him, of the possibility of applying force in political struggle. Gandhi's position on this question differed sharply from the points of view of Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh, and Tilak, who had spoken of the admissibility, on principle, and even inevitability of violent action. The arsenal of his methods of political protest taking a religious form, included also hunger strikes, which was a reinterpretation of the concept of 'fast'.

#### REGULATIVE FUNCTION OF RELIGION

Along with the political religion, one traces in Gandhism also another sign inherent in the second stage of reformation—the change in the functions of religion. It is just here that the regulative function of religion acquires an hitherto unknown significance. This is explained by the fact that the Gandhian programme of national liberation movement reflected also the gradually growing political activity of the masses, including the peasants, and their adherence to traditional forms of world outlook. Along with this, the programme in many ways conformed to the interests of the national bourgeoisie, who used it, on the one hand, as the means of revolutionizing the masses and, on the other, as the means of control over this revolutionizing; on the one hand, for preserving the unity of the anti-imperialistic movement, on the other—for checking the class struggle. '... I wish to drive away foreign capitalists who

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are sucking the blood of the people',—wrote Gandhi, turning to workers.—'When time comes, I cannot shy away from the struggle against Indian capitalists if they do not stop exploiting the workers. Today we cannot fight against two enemies. Let us fight against one, and then it will be easy, if necessary, to fight the other grown in our own country.'<sup>251</sup>

## UNIFYING FUNCTION OF RELIGION

Expressed in Gandhism is also the unifying function of religion—in the form of attempts to justify and establish, from religious-ethical positions, the idea of equality of persons, professing Hinduism, in the first instance, of the untouchables (Harijans, the 'children of god' in Gandhi's words), and also the idea of the validity of all faiths. Here he, like his predecessors, specially stressed the tolerant nature of Hinduism; and in accordance with his conception of '*svadharma*' firmly censured the cases of conversions of Hindus onto a different faith.<sup>252</sup>

## HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

The ideas of the equality of all peoples and the equal validity of all religions were the starting points for Gandhi and other reformers in their approach to the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. However, Gandhi did not so much try to show that Hinduism and Islam depended on some single complex of dogmas and notions (as done, say, by Swami Vivekananda) that the confessional differences were associated with the cultic aspect and might therefore not be taken into account, as much as he called for the establishment of such intercommunity relations in which the adepts of one faith would perceive favourably even the most odd customs and prejudices of the other.<sup>253</sup> It is only when mutual understanding is reached that the Hindus and Muslims, said Gandhi, will obtain freedom for their country.<sup>254</sup> The idea of the trueness of all religions thereby itself received a new nuance in his interpretation: instead of ascertaining confessional compatibility (or, more truly, along with it), there should be established, it was suggested, ethical

principles for mutual relations of adherents of various faiths. The conclusion drawn from here was: 'religion... must never be the apple of discord or difference of opinion'.<sup>255</sup>

In his circular to the Federation of International Fraternities (1928) Gandhi wrote: 'On the basis of long thinking and experience I have come to the conclusion that (1) every religion is true; (2) every religion contains in it some confusions; and (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my Hinduism. I have the same blissful, favourable attitude to other faiths as to my own.'<sup>256</sup> His doctrine also reveals other characteristics, typical of the reformation of the second stage—religious utopianism, acceptance of the need for self-perfectioning, the notion of the missionary role of India, and the preaching of active work in the world.

#### RELIGIOUS-PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS

Speaking of religious-philosophical views of Gandhi, incidentally, one should not associate them exclusively with the second stage of reformation: Gandhism presents also ideas of its first stage, individual traditional positions and lastly, elements of other faiths.

M. K. Gandhi's self-assessments are at times fairly contradictory. For instance, he considered himself a reformer and at the same time a righteous Hindu, '*sanatani* Hindu'. True, his interpretation of this concept is not on the orthodox level: 'I call myself a *sanatani* Hindu because (1) I believe in the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and in all that is known under the name of Hindu sacred books, and accordingly I also believe in *avatars* (reincarnations) and second birth; (2) I believe in *varnashrama dharma* in a sense which, I think, is strictly Vedic, and not in its present connotation and coarse sense; (3) I believe in the protection of cows on broader understanding than is generally done; and (4) I am not opposed to idol worship.'<sup>257</sup>

But even from this small excerpt it is clear that although he adhered to some traditional concepts, his religious views

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on the whole can hardly be regarded as orthodox. These, we shall add, demonstrate a fairly perceptible influence of Jainism and Christianity. This gives them a definite elasticity and takes them still farther from traditional Hinduism. As already stated, Gandhism has traits coinciding with the signs of reformation of the first stage. In a new historical perspective, these revive, as it were, the approach of enlightenment to dogmas of Hinduism, which in his immediate predecessors was held back by the tendency to express nationalistic ideas 'in the language of orthodoxy'.

### POSITION OF WOMEN

Gandhi is against the inferior position of women in Hindu society, against child marriages, and is for widow remarriage.<sup>258</sup> He suggests that passages justifying child marriages be simply discarded from the ancient texts. If in an earlier period he was inclined to see in the caste system something like a harmless division of Hindus according to their tendencies and capacities, later he regarded the very existence of Hinduism as dependent on the liquidation of this system: 'the caste system in the form in which we know it, is an anachronism. It must vanish, so that Hinduism and India can live and develop'.<sup>259</sup>

It is not difficult to enumerate here other aspects of his teaching, indicating, as it were, a return to the views of earlier reformers (rejection of mediation, despite the calm attitude to idol worship; struggle against inequality; appeal to reason; rejecting the divine spirit of the sacred books etc.). The endowing of religion with ethical notions characteristic of both stages of reformation and forming for Gandhi a base for the complex of his views, both religious-reformist and social-political, may also be noted here.

### RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE

An important feature of his religious doctrine, as it appears, was a peculiar detheologization of Hinduism, that is, elimination of religious ideas proper and their substitution by weak

moral-ethical categories. In Gandhi's teaching, 'religion' means an eternal and universal law in accordance with which are built the life and work of a man. This law includes recognition of non-violence, search for truth, readiness for self-sacrifice, realization of noble and brilliant potentials in the self and, what is specially important, also in the opponent, absence of evil and anger against him, fight against injustice, but not against people perpetrating it, protection of everything living, not creating evil for others etc. The tolerance for others is combined with merciless demands for self. For Gandhi, religion is service to people.

'Perhaps it would have been more correct',—wrote J. Nehru, —'if he had said that most of these people who went to exclude religion from life and politics mean by that word 'religion' something very different from what he means. It is obvious that he [Gandhi] is using it in a sense—probably moral and ethical more than any other....'<sup>260</sup> Nehru says almost the same in his *Discovery of India*: 'Usually speaking in terms of religion, he has emphasized the moral approach to political problems as well as those of every-day life. The religious background has affected those chiefly who were inclined that way, but the moral approach has influenced others also. Many have been appreciably raised to higher levels of moral and ethical action, and many more have been forced to think at least in those terms and that thought itself has some effect on action and behaviour.'<sup>261</sup>

#### CONCEPT OF GOD

The concept 'God' in Gandhi has a pragmatic content—some-times this is truth, sometimes the 'law dominating the whole life', sometimes both the law and the law-giver, sometimes the 'spinning wheel', and sometimes the atheism of the atheist. In any case, this is very far from the traditional Hindu idea. The detheologization is convincingly shown by the fact that Gandhi who first advanced the thesis 'God is truth', later replaced it by 'Truth is God' and considered it the most



important of his discoveries. At times, for the sake of curiosity, he used the word 'God' in such a context as for instance: 'leaving of dirt, spitting on the road are a sin against God and mankind'.<sup>262</sup> And in this phrase is the peculiar element of detheologization—the demand to observe rules of hygiene, as though enjoined by Hindu understanding of ritual purity.

The diverse variations in the interpretation of traditional dispensations show the reformist aspect of Gandhi's approach to the problems of religion. Many positions taken from orthodox Hinduism are used by him in the usual sense, though these also at the same time receive a wider interpretation. Thus, the principle of protection of cows which Gandhi so often spoke and wrote about, is expounded both in the old sense and in the new—as man's moral duty to protect everything living.

Such a conscious multitude of treatments of Hindu dogmas, positions and principles reflects the complexity of his outlook and also the tendency to address his teaching to varied, including the lowest, sections of population. In this tendency he, as is known, went to the extent of explaining even natural calamities as being divine punishment for the sin of untouchability. In reply to sharp objections from Rabindranath Tagore and J. Nehru, Gandhi provided a still more complex interpretation of the same phenomenon: 'What appears to us a catastrophe is so only because we do not in sufficient measure know the universal laws'.<sup>263</sup>

Consequently, reviving certain approaches arising out of the first stage of reformation, Gandhi gave them a new treatment, proceeding from the tasks of the second stage. The struggle against untouchability is thus the continuance of the social reforms of the leaders of earlier stage. In Gandhi it is, besides, directly related to political tasks, particularly to the problem of involvement into the liberation movement of wide sections of the poorest population.

UNTOUCHABILITY AND NON-VIOLENCE

The struggle against untouchability and the message of non-violence are the most important aspects of Gandhi's religious reformation. The latter acquired in Gandhism the significance of a finished dogma, as a result of which the concrete faith is to a great extent replaced in the given system by the 'religion of non-violence'.<sup>264</sup> This, in the opinion of its founder, has, on the one hand, an universal character and is addressed to the whole mankind, and on the other a definite national tinge supposed to be the consequence of objective genetic link of Gandhism with religious-philosophical tradition of the country and with subjective factors.

In other words, Gandhi thought that the principles offered by him marked not so much a phase of development of Indian social life (including also religious reformation)—this seemed to him secondary—as some universal law, displaying its action (though in various forms) alike in all historical conditions.

We have tried to show that the religious-reformist aspects of Gandhism on the whole corresponded to the main marks of the second stage of reformation of Hinduism. It may at the same time be said that in a certain measure Gandhi synthesized both stages, for, along with the general characteristics of the second stage, as already noted, many aspects of early reformation too found development in his teaching. While in Gandhi these aspects operate in the form of a synthesis with far later ideas, for some of his contemporaries these meant a second source, as it were, of reformation, that is, evolution of traditional religious consciousness, 'second birth' of reformation proper, which, however, is an anachronism from the standpoint of general ideological development.

CONCLUSION

Summing up all that has been said, one may state that in the first half of the nineteenth century, there started in Hinduism a process which can, for its typological signs, be assigned to bourgeois reformation of religion. This qualitatively new

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phenomenon in the ideological development of the country did not incidentally lead to any radical restructuring of traditional outlook. Instead, within the religious system, there emerged and took shape a complex of notions and ideas reflecting the next, higher stage of historical development. This complex did not set itself apart as an independent whole, but, as a result of definite compromises, reinterpretations and concessions made by the reformers, coexisted with orthodox religion.

And if in the beginning such coexistence was built on confrontational basis, and the bourgeois complex itself was formed on the periphery of religious system, then later, in the course of historical process, the contrast of the new and the traditional lost its acuteness and the reformist views began to be perceived as one of the elements of structure of the entire religion.

Reformation, that is, 'reformation proper', started ending when the bourgeois complex was absorbed by the religious system on par with the traditional. Their equality is understood in the sense that the possibility of selectivity without necessary juxtaposition of its constituent elements characteristic of Hinduism was theoretically restored.

The reformation ended, but was not completed. The religious consciousness of the broad sections of the population at that stage was not touched by it. Besides, in late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries, there is observed a politicalization of Hinduism which touched both the bourgeois and a considerable part of the traditional complex. This is a specific feature of reformation process, conditioned by the fact that it took place in a colonially dependent country in the background of and in association with the development of national liberation movement.

At the second stage of reformation, the anti-imperialist stage, the bourgeois complex underwent further changes, which can be appraised as one of the manifestations of the arising secularists tendencies.

Within the traditional complex, in its time not having

passed through the first, anti-feudal stage of reformation, but involved into the second stage, are formulated the premises of development of communalist views. The evolution of religion goes side by side. The reformation proper, which, as a phenomenon of stormy structure, ended in the neo-Hinduism of Ramakrishna, was restored, as it were, again in the beginning of the twentieth century but already as a phenomenon of evolutionary nature. However, by that time, the reformist views associated with the appearance and growth of early bourgeois ideas and relations, turn out to be fixed in stages, and therefore the reformation of this period is perceived as a peculiar anachronism.

Thus, the post-reformation processes taking place in the twentieth century Hinduism, are associated with the weakening and secularization of the bourgeois complex, continued by the politicalization of religion and above all of its traditional complex, also involving the hitherto untouched plasts of religious consciousness into anachronic reformation.

# NOTES

1. Q. Marx and F. Engels, *Reviews from 'Neue Rheinische Zeitung Politisch-ökonomische Revue'*, No. 2—K. Marx and F. Engels, *Works* [In Russian], vol. 7, p. 211 (The *Works* of K. Marx and F. Engels quoted here are from the 2nd edition).
2. Some problems of reformation of Hinduism were discussed by us in 1973 (see: R. B. Rybakov, *Osnovnye cherty burzhuaiznoi reformatsii induizma* [Principal Features of Bourgeois Reformation of Hinduism],—in *Religii i ateizm v Indii* [Religions and Atheism in India], M., 1973).
3. The references here are to a later edition: J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967.
4. L. S. Vasil'ev, D. E. Furman, *Khristianstvo i konfutsianstvo (opyt sravnitel'nogo sotsiologicheskogo analiza)* [Christianity and Confucianism (Experience of Comparative Sociological Analysis)],—in *Istoriya i kul'tura Kitaya* [History and Culture of China], M., 1975, p. 443.
5. E. M. Zhukov, M. A. Berg, E. B. Chernyak, V. I. Pavlov, *Teoreticheskie problemy vseмирno-istoricheskogo protsessa* [Theoretical Problems of Universal Historical Process], M., 1979, p. 264.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 267.

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7. E. N. Komarov, *Ram Mohan Rai—prosvetitel' i provozvestnik natsional'nogo dvizheniya v Indii* [*Rammohan Roy—Enlightener and Precursor of National Movement in India*],—*Obshchestvenno-politicheskaya i filosofskaya mysl' Indii* [*Social-Political and Philosophical Thought of India*], M., 1962.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. See: K. Marx, *Capital*, vol. I,—Quoted from Russian edition: K. Marx and F. Engels, vol. 23, p. 89.
11. It seems to us more natural to write the name of Rammohan as one word than the practice of writing it as two words Ram and Mohan established in our literature, specially on the analogy of other names of Roy family—Ramkanta (father), Ramlochan and Jagamohan (brothers). In English transcription one finds both the ways of writing Rammohan, but Rammohan himself preferred to write the name as one word.
12. E. V. Paevskaya, *Ram Mokhan Rai—predshestvennik burzhuaznogo natsional'nogo dvizheniya v Bengalii* [*Rammohan Roy—Precursor of Bourgeois National Movement in Bengal*],—*'Uchenye zapiski Tikhookeanskogo instituta* [*Scientific transactions of the Pacific Ocean Institute*], vol. II, M.-L., 1949.
13. E. N. Komarov, *op. cit.* (see note 7 *supra*).
14. I. Singh, *Ram Mohun Roy*, vol. I, NY, 1958, p. 39.
15. E. N. Komarov, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
16. The authenticity of the writing is disputed by certain scholars.
17. E. N. Komarov, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
18. *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Allahabad, 1906, vol. I, p. 135.
19. E. V. Paevskaya, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
20. Turning not only to the authority of the Scriptures but also to sound sense is on the whole quite characteristic of the rationalistic position of Rammohan Roy.
21. *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, vol. I, p. 112.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 119. This and other such statements showing Rammohan Roy's understanding of the importance of national unification and also of the development of contacts with other countries find an analogue in the views of the late nineteenth century reformists, particularly, Swami Vivekananda, although in this last case these already have a distinctly anti-colonial character.
24. I. Singh, *Ram Mohun Roy*, pp. 195-96.
25. B. Walker, *Hindu World*, vol. 2, London, 1968, p. 464.
26. Quoted from: I. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
27. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 358.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 371-72.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
30. B. Walker, *Hindu World*, p. 229.
31. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 121.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 381-82.

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34. True, during this period such family already starts disintegrating. Rammohan's father, for instance, lived separately from his father.
35. E. N. Komarov, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
36. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 90.
37. Quoted from: I. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
38. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 45.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 473.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Despite all censure of R. Roy and the attempts to attract the ancient texts, his teaching went away a bit far from the tradition, which forced his followers consciously or unconsciously to look for more effective methods of associating reformation with traditional ideas.
42. For comparison with R. Roy's translations, the following editions of texts of the Upanishads and of their translations into English have been used: *The Principal Upanisads*, Edited with Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes by S. Radhakrishnan, London, 1953 (hereafter: Radhakrishnan); *Eight Upanisads* in 2 vols. with the Commentary by Swami Gambhirananda, Calcutta, 1965 (hereafter: Gambhirananda); *The Upanishads—An Anthology* by D. S. Sarma, Bombay, 1964 (hereafter: Sarma).
43. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 570.
44. The words 'Brahman' and 'Atman' are generally wanting in Rammohan's translations.
45. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 75.
46. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 592.
47. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 42.
48. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 592.
49. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 76.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
51. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 607-08.
52. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 26.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
54. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 682.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 681.
56. Gambhirananda, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 121.
57. Sarma, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
58. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 26.
59. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 692.
60. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 31.
61. Quoted from: I. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
62. It is to be noted that even the colonial powers looked on R. Roy as an enemy: they secretly financed the printed statements of the orthodox persons (often employed in the service of the Company), and one of the Englishmen, some Ellis, even himself entered into polemics from the side of opponents of R. Roy, hiding his real name under the deliberate Brahmin pseudonym Sankar Sastri.
63. *The English Works...*, vol. II, pp. 879-80.

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64. Cynicism often marked the work of the missionaries even later. Thus, at the time of famine, they went to villages with a sack of rice, offering the grain only to those who agreed to be converted to Christianity.
65. *The English Works...*, vol. II, pp. 877-78.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 880.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 884.
68. *The English Works...*, vol. I, p. 146.
69. *The English Works...*, vol. II, p. 907.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 881. There is an evidence (true, originating from such a not quite authentic source as the founder of Theosophical Society, E. P. Blavatskaya), that during the last years of his life, in England, R. Roy was so deeply shocked by the non-conformity of the practical life of the Englishmen to Christian doctrines that this affected even his health and quickened his death (*The Father of Modern India. Commemoration Volume of the Ram Mohun Ray Centenary Celebrations 1933*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 166).
71. *The English Works...*, vol. II, p. 883.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 675.
73. Quoted from: V. E. Titov, *Pravoslaviye [Orthodox Church]*, M., 1932, p. 145.
74. *The English Works...*, vol. II, p. 483.
75. *Ibid.*
76. This name may be rendered as 'Society of *Brahmana*', 'Society of Worship to *Brahmana*' but not as Society of *Brahma*' as erroneously done at one time in our literature.
77. I. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
78. V. Naravana, *Modern Indian Thought*, NY, 1932, p. 27.
79. One of the leaders closely associated with Dharma Sabha was Ramkamal Sen, grandfather of Keshav Chandra Sen.
80. The editor of '*Samachar Chandika*' was Bhavani Charan Banerjee, a former associate of R. Roy, but having fallen out from him when the fight against the 'Sati' system intensified.
81. *The Father of Modern India*, vol. II, p. 40.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
83. *The English Works...*, Calcutta, 1901, p. 104.
84. *The Father of Modern India*, p. 104.
85. *The English Works...*, p. 308.
86. *Ibid.*
87. After R. Roy's departure, rumours were spread in Calcutta that on his return he intended to intensify the campaign for the rights of widows for remarriage.
88. See the facsimile of the funeral protocol of R. Roy (S. D. Collet, *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 368). It is interesting that the dead body was found to have the Brahmin's cord which R. Roy wore unnoticed under his dress.
89. It is difficult for us to imagine how hostile was the attitude of the orthodox to R. Roy—he was threatened with physical torture; his family was threatened although in his house he was tragically alone,—wiv's left him, think-

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ing that his presence was defiling them, his mother went away to Jagannath Temple in Puri, to atone for his 'sins' (and died there only), the differences of opinion with the father were so sharp that he did not attend even his funeral rites. R. Roy's death abroad was a matter of joy for the orthodox Hindus who saw in it a divine punishment. It is to be noted that the main guilt of R. Roy in their eyes was that he criticized Hinduism publicly.

90. D. Tagore, *The Autobiography*, London, 1916, pp. 66-7.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
92. The exceptionally influential and notable family of Tagores was however not purely a Brahmin family in the eyes of the orthodox, and was believed to have lost its caste because of the close association of some of its members with Muslims.
93. Quoted from: D. Tagore, *The Autobiography*, p. 63.
94. *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. X, pt. 2, Bombay, 1932, p. 101.
95. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Delhi, 1932, p. 604.
96. J. N. Farquhar, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
97. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, p. 605.
98. One of its possible rendering enables us to regard the *Gayatri-mantra* as a prayer to the one omniscient god. It is considered so sacred by the Hindus that not all the scribes thought to reproduce it. There exists a view that in the past this *mantra* was used by the non-Aryans for invoking the Vedic religion for converting the non-Aryans into the Vedic religion. For having an ideas as to how it was received in the Tagore family, see: R. Tagore, *My Reminiscences* (Russian edition: M.-L., 1924, p. 73).
99. J. N. Farquhar, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, Delhi, 1932, p. 355.
100. *Ibid.*
101. It must be said that some, though less important, violations of the ritual were allowed in the Tagore family even earlier. After his first visit to Europe, Dwarkanath, for instance, openly refused to perform the ritual of purification. As stated by Max Müller, he had no intention to perform this ceremony even after returning from his second visit. 'Even otherwise I feed a great number of Brahmins all the time in my house, and this is quite sufficient atonement'—he said to the German scholar (M. Müller, *Rammohun to Ramakrishna*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 23).
102. D. Tagore, *The Autobiography*, p. 30.
103. J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 45.
104. D. S. Sarma, *Hinduism through the Ages*, Bombay, 1932, p. 69.
105. It is worth noting that Tagore consciously looks for texts which should conform to his reformist views.
106. D. Tagore, *The Autobiography*, p. 161.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
109. J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 42.



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110. In his reminiscences on his childhood and youth, Keshav Chandra Sen stressed that at first he was not religious.
111. S. Sastri, *Men I Have Seen* [n.d.], p. 4.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
113. In his youth K. Sen was an amateur actor and successfully played in Shakespearean plays, specially *Hamlet*.
114. P. C. Mazoomdar, *The Life and Teaching of Keshub Chunder Sen*, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 67-8.
115. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol. IV, Calcutta, 1956, p. 628.
116. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, p. 610.
117. D. Tagore, *The Autobiography*, p. 14.
118. From a letter to Max Müller, dated 27 December 1884 (M. Müller, *From Rammohun to Ramakrishna*, p. 27).
119. S. Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
120. *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, p. 103.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 469.
122. Judging from his *Autobiography*, this idea was not alien to him even in his younger days. In his childhood years his grandmother made him pray before the forces of nature, later in the Vedic pantheism he saw the manifestation of monotheism; in his reminiscences he associated all the inner disturbances and crises with the phenomena of nature. The inconsistency of Tagore's views, associating the Brahmoist monotheism with Vedic pantheism, was noted, in particular, by Swami Vivekananda: "How did you like the old gentleman, Debendra Nath Tagore?...What enlightens your insides on a dark night when the Fire God, Sun God, Moon God, and Star Goddesses have gone to sleep?" (Personal letter dated 29 April 1898: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. VIII, Calcutta, 1964, p. 451).
123. The Vishnuite Brahmin offering worship to Krishna, preaching that the believer could merge with the deity through aesthetic love (*Bhakti*). The way of *bhakti* was more emotional and simpler than the way of *jnana* (theological knowledge)—and hence more democratic. Chaitanya rejected the dogma of infallibility of the Vedas and opposed the caste hierarchy, although his followers recognized not only the caste differences common to all Hindus but also the differences amongst the descendants of his disciples; marriages between them were forbidden. Chaitanya's followers considered him one of the *avatars* of Vishnu (B. Walker, *Hindu World*, vol. I, London, 1968, pp. 215-16).
124. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, p. 621.
125. P. C. Mazoomdar, *The Life and Teachings...*, p. 124.
126. In many ways this resulted from the traits of K. Sen's character, from his 'leaderism'.
127. P. C. Mazoomdar, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
128. B. C. Pal wrote that the method shown to K. Sen was noted with pride by his countrymen, although most of them did not share his feelings of blind loyalty (see: *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, pp. 168-19; B. C. Pal,

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- The Brahmo Samaj and the Battle for Swaraj in India*, Calcutta, 1945, pp. 45-6).
129. B. Majumdar, *History of Indian Social and Political Ideas from Rammohun to Dayananda*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 156.
  130. Acceding to the request of the British Government, in 1878, he gave his daughter in marriage to the prince of the small state of Cooch Behar. The fact that neither the bride nor the bridegroom had attained the minimum age required by Law for civil marriage, evoked sharp condemnation. Besides, since the bridegroom was a Hindu and not a Brahmo, the marriage was performed by observing the ceremonies against which all Brahmos fought in the course of so many years. There also was no surety that later the bridegroom would not become a polygamist.
  131. He regarded the relations between England and India as those between equal and mutually interested partners, but, despite the ardent calls for loyalty, criticized the British for hurting the national pride of the Indians. Thus, his position is close to that of R. Roy, though does not conform to the level of development of bourgeois ideology.
  132. P. C. Mozoomdar, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
  - 133 *Ibid.*, p. 218.
  134. While some of these elements had a reformist character in the teaching of Ramakrishna, under whose influence K. Sen turned to tradition, these had a totally different and special connotation in K. Sen's treatment, who had replaced them by Brahmoism. The dogmas of Hinduism rejected earlier were not simply revived, these were used to give to Christianity the likeness of the national Indian religion, that is, there had been observed a tendency at 'Indianisation' of Christianity.
  135. In early 20th century, the *Nava Vidhana* was simultaneously having three different divine services, but even then some followers of K. Sen refused to attend any of them.
  136. There were forty-three such departments in all in 1909, these had 1044 members (H. C. Sarkar, *The Religion of the Brahmo Samaj*, Calcutta, 1931, p. 17).
  137. J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 70.
  138. B. C. Pal, *The Brahmo Samaj*..., pp. 53-4.
  139. Founded in Bombay on 10 April 1875, though started active work two years later when its headquarters were shifted to Lahore. The name 'Arya Samaj' should in the context of Swami Dayananda's teaching be translated as 'Society of the Enlightened'.
  140. It was just under the influence of K. Sen that Swami Dayananda started using specially learnt Hindi expressions in his oral and written statements, and this for greatly increasing his audience.
  141. *The Light of Truth*. English Translation of Swami Dayananda's Book *Satyartha Prakasha* by G. P. Upadhyaya, n.d., pt. X, p. 365.
  142. *Ibid.*, pt. III, p. 79.
  143. *Ibid.*, pt. VI, p. 243.
  144. *Ibid.*, pt. VII, p. 246.
  145. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-51.

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146. J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movement in India*, pp. 104, 326. The scholars have not so far been able to establish the exact place of birth of Dayananda; there are only assumptions. The name of this place is deciphered, despite the mass of details, in the autobiographical sketches. Besides, the actual name of Dayananda is also not known though the Aryasamajists, by various comparisons, have ascertained that his name was Mulshankar Tiwari. He himself repeatedly and categorically refused to give his name or the name of his father (for details see: J. T. F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati; His Life and Ideas*, Delhi, 1956).
147. *The Light of Truth*, pt. XI, pp. 438-39.
148. *Ibid.*, pt. XIII, p. 717.
149. The differences were mainly on the issue as to whether the book *Satyartha Prakash*, as suggested by the conservative section, should, along with the Vedas, be regarded as a Canonical text.
150. The actual name is Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya. For more details see: R. B. Rybakov, *Religiozno-reformatorskoe uchenie Ramakrishny Paramahamsy (1836-1886)* [*Religious-Reformist Teaching of Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886)*],— in *Ideologicheskie problemy sovremennoi Indii* [*Ideological Problems of Modern India*], M., 1952.
151. *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, NY, 1942, p. 177.
152. *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 734.
153. The figures in brackets correspond to Ramakrishna's sayings in the publication: Max Muller, *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*, London-Bombay, 1900.
154. *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 179.
155. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
156. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
157. K. Marx, *Britanskoe vladychestvo v Indii* [*British Rule in India*],—K. Marx and F. Engels, vol. 9, p. 136.
158. The liquidation of special mediators between god and people, as is known, was one of the demands in the Christian Reformation (for example, 'universal sanctity' of Luther); in Europe it was directed mainly against the Catholic Church. Because of the characteristics of Hinduism which did not have an organized church, in India, this demand found expression above all in the traditional form of struggle against the exclusive position of the Brahmins. Besides, here, as also in Europe, this was a struggle for making religion simple and unexpensive.
159. At the next stage of reformation, when the ideas of bourgeois nationalism acquired a dominating influence, the thesis of equality found a further development: Swami Vivekananda had already written about the equality of nations, using religious phraseology applied to this thesis.
160. Moreover, the enlightenment in India in the first half of the 19th century and generally in the East is a phenomenon, qualitatively different from the European, particularly because the religious reformation here fulfils the functions of enlightenment at a definite stage.

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161. Often, some aspects or the other of traditional Hinduism were simply ignored, which was as good as criticizing them.
162. It must be admitted that such mimicry deprived the reformation of its pressing character, reducing the acuteness of its clash with the orthodox.
163. Dayananda's position on this issue, though, would seem to be a direct contrast to Debendranath Tagore's though it was actually very close to the latter. Declaring 'back to the Vedas' (by which were implied only the Samhitas), Dayananda categorically rejected all other 'sacred texts' of Hinduism, including the Upanishads, Brahmanas, Vedantic and Tantric texts.
164. It is interesting that the reformists of this period, without exception, were far more radical in their practical work than in theoretical formulations.
165. E. V. Pavskaya, *op. cit.*
166. E. N. Komarov, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
167. V. I. Lenin, *Voennaya programma proletarskoi revolyutsii* [*Military Programme of Proletarian Revolution,—Complete Works in Russian*], vol. 30, p. 132.
168. On his birth he was named Vireshwar, but soon he was renamed Narendranath. In his maturer years, on becoming a sannycsi, he changed his name several times, before finally adopting the name Vivekananda (on the advice of the Maharaja of Jaipur) on the eve of his visit to U.S.A.—the name under which he was destined to go down in history (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 288).
169. A definite inclination towards Saivism may be observed also in Vivekananda himself despite his monkhood and Vedantism. It is in this light, we feel, that his pilgrimage to the temple of Siva in the Himalayas (1898), which he, for its importance to him, placed on the same footing as such events of his life as his speech in Chicago and his meeting with Ramakrishna. This apparently may explain some extravagant actions when, on the occasion, of Ramakrishna's birthday, Vivekananda, masked as Siva, gave sacred cords to non-Brahmins (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 545), and also his passion for Saivite South, which he preferred to other areas of the country (including Bengal). It is possible that his understanding of *avatars* not in the usual Vishnuite sense as embodiments of god but as of spiritual teachers of mankind, was the result of family upbringing to some extent.
170. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 102.
171. Quoted from: R. Rolland, *Experience of Study of Mysticism and Spiritual Life of Modern India. Life of Ramakrishna* (quoted from the Russian version: R. Rolland, *Collected Works*, vol. 19, L., 1936, pp. 163-64).
172. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Calcutta, 1952, vol. 5, p. 223 (hereafter: VCW).
173. VCW, vol. 7, p. 466. Written in 1894.
174. VCW, vol. 5, p. 29. Emphasis Swami Vivekananda's.
175. At the time of Swami Vivekananda's stay in Punjab in 1898 there were also rumours that he was possibly taking the responsibility of the head of the Arya Samaj (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 530).

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176. VCW, vol. 1, p. 15, Emphasis Vivekananda's.
177. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, pp. 211-2.
178. Swami Vivekananda's social views are discussed in detail in the article: E. N. Komarov, *Zarozhdenie kritiki burzhuaznogo obschestva v Indii kontsa XIX v.* [*Conception of Criticism of Bourgeois Society in India in the Late 19th Century*],—in *Ideologicheskie techeniya sovremennoi Indii* [*Ideological Currents in Modern India*], M., 1965. The system of his philosophical views is examined in the book: V. S. Kostyuchenko, *Vivekananda* [in Russian], M., 1952.
179. K. Marx, *Letters from 'Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher'*,—quoted from the Russian edition: K. Marx and F. Engels, vol. 1, p. 371.
180. VCW, vol. 5, p. 222.
181. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
182. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
184. 'You, the gods on the earth-sinners ? The sin is in calling a person so !' (VCW, vol. 1, p. 11).
185. VCW, vol. 1, p. 39.
186. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
188. Quoted from: V. S. Naravane, *Modern Indian Thought*, NY, 1952, p. 97.
189. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 553.
190. VCW, vol. 4, p. 373.
191. Quoted from R. Rolland, *Universal Gospel of Vivekananda*—quoted from Russian version: R. Rolland, *Complete Works*, vol. XX, M., 1936, p. 17.
192. VCW, vol. 1, p. 42.
193. True, in Hinduism, there is no division into 'here' and 'there', into this-side and that-side world, but there is only 'now' and 'then'. In the present case, by 'this-side world' we mean the domain of practical activity.
194. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, pp. 506-07.
195. *Ibid.*, p. 507.
196. K. Marx, *Luther as the Tertiary Judge between Strauss and Feyerbach*,—quoted from the Russian version: K. Marx and F. Engels, vol. 1, p. 28.
197. VCW, vol. 1, p. 371.
198. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
199. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
200. See, for example, the parable about the disciple who walked on water 'as if on land', reciting the name of the teacher. The parable, true, stresses another thing—the self opinion of the teacher who, trusting the magical power of his name, tried to walk on water, shouting 'I ! I !', and drowned ! But Ramakrishna made a positive assessment of the blind faith of the disciple.
201. VCW, vol. 1, p. 134.
202. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
203. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
204. *Ibid.*, pp. 368-69.
205. VCW, vol. 5, p. 206.

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206. VCV, vol. 1, p. 134.
207. VCV, vol. 5, p. 53.
208. VCV, vol. 1, p. 38.
209. *Ibid.*, p. 433.
210. VCV, vol. 5, p. 94. Emphasis Vivekananda's.
211. Quoted from: V. S. Naravane, *Modern Indian Thought*, p. 105.
212. VCV, vol. 5, p. 51.
213. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
214. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
215. VCV, vol. 4, p. 368.
216. Cows, taken by the believers to be their mothers.
217. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, pp. 488-89.
218. *Ibid.*, p. 630.
219. VCV, vol. 7, p. 247.
220. VCV, vol. 1, p. 474.
221. For philosophical views of Aurobindo Ghosh, in detail, see: V. S. Kostyuchenko, *Integral'naya Vedanta* [*Integral Vedanta*], M., 1952.
222. *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, Pondicherry, 1953, p. 9.
223. K. Singh, *Prophet of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 1952, p. 38.
224. Quoted from: V. S. Kostyuchenko, *Integral'naya Vedanta* [*Integral Vedanta*], p. 46.
225. Quoted from: K. Singh, *Prophet of Indian Nationalism*, p. 74.
226. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.
227. S. Mitra, *The Liberator Sri Aurobindo, India and the World*, Delhi [etc.], 1954, p. 26.
228. V. S. Kostyuchenko, *Integral'naya Vedanta* [*Integral Vedanta*], p. 49.
229. A. V. Raikov, *Indiiskie natsional'nye revolyutsionery i religiya* [*Indian National Revolutionaries and Religion*],—in *Religiya i ateizm v Indii* [*Religion and Atheism in India*], M., 1952, p. 9.
230. I. M. Reisner, *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaya deyatel'nost' Tilak v gody revolyutsionnogo pod'ema v Indii (1905-1908)* [*Social-Political Activity of Tilak in the years of Revolutionary Growth in India (1905-1908)*],—in *Natsional 'no-osvoboditel'logo dvizhenie v Indii i deyatel'nost' B. G. Tilaka* [*National-Liberation Movement in India and B. G. Tilak's Work*], M., 1958, p. 564.
231. N. M. Gol'dberg, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak—vozhd' demokraticheskogo kryla natsional'nogo dvizheniya v Maharashtra* [*Bal Gangadhar Tilak—The Leader of the Democratic Wing of the National Movement in Maharashtra*],—in *Natsional 'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie v Indii i deyatel'nost' B. G. Tilaka* [*National-Liberation Movement in India and B. G. Tilak's Work*], p. 57.
232. D. S. Sarma, *Hinduism Through the Ages*, Bombay, 1952, p. 105.
233. D. P. Karmarkar, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: A Study*, Bombay, 1956, p. 74.
234. Quoted from: A. V. Raikov, *Natsional'no-revolyutsionnye organizatsii Indii v bor'be za svobodu* [*National-Revolutionary Organizations of India in Their Struggle for Freedom*], M., 1956, p. 36.
235. K. Singh, *Prophet of Indian Nationalism*, pp. 80-1.
236. Sri Aurobindo, *Speeches*, Pondicherry, 1952, p. 6.

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237. VGV, vol. 5, p. 216.
238. K. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-1.
239. *Ibid.*
240. See: E. N. Komarov, *Zerozhdenie kritiki burzhuaznogo obshchestva v Indii kontsa XIX v. (sotsial'nye vozzreniya Bankimchondro Chottopadkhaya i Svami Vivekanandy)* [Conception of Criticism of Bourgeois Society in India in the Late XIX Century (Social Views of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya and Swami Vivekananda)],—in *Ideologicheskis techeniya sovremennoi Indii* [Ideological Currents of Modern India], M., 1956, p. 75.
241. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
242. VGV, vol. 5, p. 216.
243. VGV, vol. 4, p. 485.
244. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 419.
245. K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
246. *The Light of Truth*, English Translation of Swami Dayananda's Book *Satyartha Prakash* by G. P. Upadhyaya, Allahabad, p. 684.
247. VGV, vol. 4, p. 373.
248. Specially devoted to this theme is the article: O. V. Mezentsseva, *Elementy reformatsii induizma v mirovozzrenii M. K. Gandi* [Elements of Reformation of Hinduism in the Outlook of M. K. Gandhi],—in *Religiya i obshchestvennaya mysl' stran Vostoka* [Religion and Social Thought of the Countries of the East], M., 1974.
249. The author no longer holds the viewpoint expressed by him earlier (see: R. B. Rybakov, *Osnovnye cherty burzhuaznoi reformatsii induizma* [Principal Features of Bourgeois Reformation of Hinduism],—in *Religii i ateizm v Indii* [Religion and Atheism in India], M., 1956, p. 165).
250. V. I. Lenin, *Proekt programmy nashei partii* [Draft Programme of Our Party],—in his *Complete Works*, vol. 4, p. 228.
251. Quoted from: O. V. Martyshin, *Politicheskie vzglyady Mokhandasa Karamchanda Gandi* [Political Views of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi], M., 1970, p. 133.
252. B. Walker, *Hindu World*, vol. I, London, 1956, p. 374.
253. L. Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, pt. 1, Bombay, 1956, p. 215.
254. *Ibid.*
255. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, vol. 2, p. 450.
256. Quoted from: J. Nehru, *Discovery of India* (Russian ed.: M., 1955, p. 390).
257. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *My Life* (Russian ed.: M., 1956, p. 475).
258. According to the data cited by him, in 1921, India had 11,892 widows younger than five years, 85,037—in the age group from five to ten, and 2,32,147—between ten and fifteen (see: L. Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 233).
259. Quoted from: J. Nehru, *Discovery of India* (Russian ed., p. 124).
260. J. Nehru, *Autobiography* (quoted from: Russian ed., M., 1955, pp. 400, 401).
261. J. Nehru, *Discovery of India* (Russian ed., p. 486).
262. L. Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 101.
263. Quoted from: E. N. Komarov and A. D. Litman, *Mirovozzrenie Mokhandasa*

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*Karamchanda Gandhi* [*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's World Outlook*], M., 1956, p. 147.

264. One of the main features of Gandhian 'religion of non-violence' is the supremacy of means over the goal, which gave rise to many contradictions when Gandhi's doctrine came in clash with the political reality.